Culture and Customs of the United States

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Culture and Customs of the United States

Volume 1
Customs and Society

EDITED BY BENJAMIN F. SHEARER

Culture and Customs of North America

GREENWOOD PRESS
Westport, Connecticut • London

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Culture and customs of the United States / edited by Benjamin F. Shearer.
p. cm.—(Culture and customs of North America, ISSN 1940–1132)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978–0–313–33875–5 (set : alk. paper)—ISBN 978–0–313–33876–2 (vol. 1 : alk. paper)—ISBN 978–0–313–33877–9 (vol. 2 : alk. paper)
1. United States—Civilization. 2. United States—Social life and customs. 3. United States—Social conditions. I. Shearer, Benjamin F.
E169.1.C843 2008
973—dc22 2007039174

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data is available.

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2007039174
ISBN-13: 978–0–313–33875–5 (set)
978–0–313–33876–2 (vol 1)
978–0–313–33877–9 (vol 2)
ISSN: 1940–1132

First published in 2008

Greenwood Press, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881
An imprint of Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.
www.greenwood.com

Printed in the United States of America

The paper used in this book complies with the Permanent Paper Standard issued by the National Information Standards Organization (Z39.48–1984).

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Preface

Culture and Customs of the United States is part of the Greenwood Culture and Customs of North America series. As such, this work provides a glimpse into contemporary U.S. culture and a context through which to understand it. A chronology is provided as well as a detailed index to the complete work. Bibliographies may be found at the end of each chapter, and a selected general bibliography is also provided.

The first chapter is a general overview of the land, climate, people, language, and history of the United States. The vastness and abundance of the land is one key to understanding the American character—how Americans think of themselves. Likewise, regional variations also help to define Americans' understanding of themselves and introduce a certain diversity into what it means to be an American. Indeed, diversity is the hallmark of this nation of immigrants. The ethnic mix of the country has always been and remains ever in flux, and Americans have never been shy to borrow what they like from any ethnic group to the effect of redefining their culture and customs.

The following chapters delve into particular aspects of the American cultural experience. Chapter 2 explores American religions, overwhelmingly Christian, and how religious thought affects the political and social arenas. Gender, marriage, family, and educational issues are considered in chapter 3. In chapter 4, American holiday customs and leisure time activities, including sports, are the subjects. Chapter 5 takes a look at the eclectic world of American food and fashion. U.S. literature is covered in the sixth chapter, media and cinema in the next. Chapter 8 covers the performing arts, and finally, the last chapter discusses American art and architecture as well as housing.

Chronology

30,000 B.C.E.	Migrating groups from Asia and South America begin populating North America.
1492	Christopher Columbus lands in the New World.
1565	Spanish found St. Augustine, Florida.
1607	Jamestown, Virginia, colony founded by the British.
1619	First African slaves arrive in Virginia.
1620	Pilgrims land at Plymouth and sign the Mayflower Compact.
1621	First Thanksgiving at Plymouth.
1626	Dutch found New Amsterdam on Manhattan.
1636	Harvard College founded.
1638	Sweden founds a colony in Delaware.
	First Baptist church in America is founded.
1692	Witchcraft trials in Salem, Massachusetts.
1718	French found New Orleans.
1729	Benjamin Franklin buys the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and is its publisher.
1741	Jonathan Edwards gives sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," epitomizing America's religious Great Awakening.

1769	Fr. Junipero Serra founds mission at San Diego, California.
1775	American Revolution breaks out with the battle of Lexington and Concord.
1776	Newly named United States of America declares independence from Great Britain.
1781	American victory in the battle of Yorktown ends the American Revolution; Articles of Confederation become the law of the land.
1783	Treaty of Paris officially ends the Revolution and expands American territory to the Mississippi River.
	The *Pennsylvania Evening Post* is the first daily newspaper in America.
1789	Constitution replaces Articles of Confederation as America's governing document; George Washington becomes first president.
1790	The first U.S. census counts 3,893,874 people, of whom 694,207 are slaves.
1793	Eli Whitney invents the cotton gin, which proves a boon for the use of slave labor.
1796	Amelia Simmons publishes *American Cookery,* the first cookbook in America.
1800	Congress convenes in the new U.S. capital, Washington, D.C.
1803	America purchases Louisiana from France, doubling the size of the nation.
1808	Importation of slaves ends by federal law.
1812	War of 1812, ended with the Treaty of Ghent in 1814, settles no American issues.
1817	The New York Stock and Exchange Board is established.
1818	United States and Great Britain agree on U.S.-Canadian border.
1819	Writer Washington Irving's *Sketchbook* first appears.
1821	The Adams-Onís Treaty with Spain, negotiated in 1819, is ratified, ending Spanish claims on Oregon and U.S. claims on Texas and giving the United States a southwestern border and Florida.
1826	James Fenimore Cooper publishes *The Last of the Mohicans.*

1830	President Andrew Jackson signs the Indian Removal Act into law.
	Joseph Smith founds a church in New York that takes the name Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) in 1838.
1838	The Trail of Tears begins as the Cherokee are forced to migrate to Indian Territory.
1844	With the aid of government funding, Samuel F. B. Morse proves the commercial efficacy of the telegraph.
1846	First officially recorded baseball game takes place at Elysian Fields in Hoboken, New Jersey, between the New York Base Ball Club and the New York Knickerbockers.
1847	Frederick Douglas starts the abolitionist newspaper the *North Star.*
1850	Nathaniel Hawthorne publishes *The Scarlet Letter.*
1851	Herman Melville publishes *Moby Dick.*
1852	Roman Catholicism becomes America's largest single religious denomination. Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes *Uncle Tom's Cabin.*
1857	In the Dred Scott case, the U.S. Supreme Court decides that African Americans have no rights.
1861	The Civil War begins and ends in 1865 with defeat of the Confederate States. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow publishes "Paul Revere's Ride."
1867	The United States purchases Alaska from Russia.
1868	Louisa May Alcott publishes *Little Women.*
1870	New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art is founded.
1873	Levi Strauss and Jacob Davis patent blue jeans.
1874	Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone.
	The Women's Christian Temperance Union is founded in Cleveland, Ohio.
1875	Mary Baker Eddy publishes *Science and Health,* the basis for Christian Science.
1876	Walter Camp, the father of American football, writes the first rules for American football at the Massasoit Convention.
	Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) publishes *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer.*

1877	Henry James publishes *The American.*
1879	Thomas Edison invents the lightbulb.
1889	The *Wall Street Journal* begins publication.
1890	Massacre at Wounded Knee becomes the last battle of the Indian wars that began in the seventeenth century.
1891	James Naismith invents basketball at Springfield College (Massachusetts) for the YMCA and writes the first rules the next year.
1896	U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* establishes "separate but equal" practice in race relations, thus reinforcing segregation.
1898	The United States annexes Hawaii.
	The Spanish-American War leaves the United States with the Philippines, Guam, Puerto Rico, and Cuba.
1903	Orville and Wilbur Wright successfully fly their airplane in North Carolina.
	America's first narrative film, the 10-minute "The Great Train Robbery," is shown in theaters.
1908	Henry Ford produces the first Model-T automobile.
	Ashcan School (artists William Glackens, Robert Henri, George Luks, and John Sloan) exhibit their works in New York City.
1909	The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is founded in Springfield, Illinois.
1911	Radical magazine the *Masses* starts publication.
1913	Cecil B. DeMille makes Hollywood's first full-length feature film, *The Squaw Man,* a smash hit that helped to establish Hollywood films.
1915	T. S. Eliot publishes "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock."
1916	Margaret Sanger opens America's first birth control clinic in Brooklyn, New York.
1917	United States enters World War I.
1920	Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution gives women the right to vote.
	KDKA in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, becomes the first radio broadcasting station in the United States.

	Edith Wharton publishes *The Age of Innocence.*
	Census reveals that most Americans now live in urban areas.
1924	All native-born Indians are given U.S. citizenship.
	George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* is first performed in New York City.
1925	F. Scott Fitzgerald publishes *The Great Gatsby.*
	John Scopes is convicted in court for teaching evolution at a Tennessee public school.
1926	Ernest Hemingway publishes *The Sun Also Rises.*
1929	The Museum of Modern Art in New York City opens to the public.
	William Faulkner publishes *The Sound and the Fury.*
	Stock market crash precipitates the Great Depression.
1930	Wallace Fard Muhammad founds a mosque in Detroit that is the origin of the Nation of Islam.
1931	Boris Karloff stars in the film *Frankenstein.*
	Construction of the Empire State Building is completed.
1932	Americans are introduced to European architecture as the International Style exhibition opens at the Museum of Modern Art.
1934	George Balanchine and Lincoln Kerstein found the School of American Ballet.
1935	Federal homesteading ends, except for Alaska.
1936	Charlie Chaplin's film *Modern Times* appears in theaters.
1937	Walt Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* is the first animated full-length feature film.
1939	WRGB makes the first network television broadcast from New York City to Schenectady, New York.
	Professional baseball and football games are televised for the first time.
	John Steinbeck publishes *Grapes of Wrath.*
	Gone with the Wind is a Hollywood smash hit.
1941	The National Gallery of Art opens on the mall in Washington, D.C.

	Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane* revolutionizes filmmaking.
	United States enters World War II after Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
1943	Artist Jackson Pollock has his first one-man show.
1948	Architect Philip Johnson builds his glass house.
1949	Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* premiers.
1950	United States enters Korean War, which ends with armistice in 1953.
1951	J. D. Salinger publishes *The Catcher in the Rye.*
1954	In the case of *Oliver L. Brown et al. v. the Board of Education of Topeka (KS) et al.,* the U.S. Supreme Court overturns the separate but equal provision of *Plessy v. Ferguson,* allowing for the racial integration of schools.
1955	Rosa Parks refuses to give her seat to a white man, thus starting a bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, as a civil rights protest.
	First McDonald's restaurant opens in Des Plaines, Illinois.
	Disneyland opens in Anaheim, California.
1956	Elvis Presley makes his first number one hit, "Heartbreak Hotel."
1957	Jack Kerouac publishes *On the Road.*
1958	New York City's Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, opens.
1960	Televangelist Pat Robertson purchases a small Virginia station and calls his operation the Christian Broadcasting Network, thus beginning conservative Christian network television.
1961	President John F. Kennedy sends 100 special forces troops to Vietnam.
1962	Pop artist Andy Warhol executes oil on canvas, painting "200 Campbell's Soup Cans."
1963	Civil rights march on Washington, D.C.
	Bob Dylan records "Blowin' in the Wind."
1964	Civil Rights Act signed into law, prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, religion, or national origin.
1965	National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities founded.

	Antiwar marches in Washington, D.C., and race riots in Los Angeles.
1967	Film *The Graduate* is in theaters.
1968	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy are assassinated.
1969	Group exhibit of conceptual art is mounted in New York City.
	Woodstock music festival takes place.
	Stonewall riot in New York begins the gay liberation movement.
	Neil Armstrong becomes first man on the moon on July 20.
1970	*Jesus Christ Superstar* is performed on Broadway.
	The movie *M*A*S*H* is in theaters.
1971	*All in the Family* initiates socially conscious comedy on television.
1972	The Equal Rights Amendment, which prohibits the denial or abridgement of equality of rights on account of sex, passes Congress and is sent to the states for ratification.
	Ms. magazine appears on newsstands.
	Movie *The Godfather* sets opening day records.
	Burglars break into Watergate headquarters of the Democratic Party National Committee Offices.
1973	President Richard M. Nixon declares "peace with honor" in Vietnam.
	Evangelists Paul and Jan Crouch found the Trinity Broadcasting Network, which claims to be the largest Christian broadcasting network in the United States.
	U.S. Supreme Court overturns state abortion restrictions in *Roe v. Wade.*
	People magazine begins publication.
1975	*Jaws* is a megahit in theaters.
1976	Alex Haley publishes *Roots.*
	Barbara Walters becomes first woman to anchor a U.S. network news broadcast.
1977	First installment of *Star Wars* hits theaters.

1978	Woody Allen's film *Annie Hall* starts a new fashion trend.
	Herman Wouk publishes *War and Remembrance.*
1979	Cable sports network ESPN is launched.
1980	CNN begins 24-hour televised news reporting.
1981	The IBM PC enters the market.
	MTV comes to cable TV.
1982	The Equal Rights Amendment fails to be ratified by the states.
	Gannett launches the nationwide newspaper *USA Today.*
	Michael Jackson's "Thriller" is a best-selling album.
1985	Quantum Computer Services, which became America Online, is founded.
1986	Fox becomes America's fourth national TV network, along with ABC, CBS, and NBC.
1987	Toni Morrison publishes *Beloved.*
1990	United States sends troops to liberate Iraqi-occupied Kuwait in the Persian Gulf War.
1991	Condoms advertised on American television for the first time.
1992	Race riot breaks out in Los Angeles when police are acquitted of beating Rodney King, an African American man.
1993	Terrorists set off a car bomb in the garage of the World Trade Center in New York City.
	The military adopts a "don't ask, don't tell" policy in regard to homosexuals in the service.
1995	*Toy Story* is the first digitally animated full-length feature film.
1996	The Defense of Marriage Act, which does not recognize same-sex marriage, becomes federal law.
1997	Blogs first appear on the Internet.
1999	President Bill Clinton is acquitted in his impeachment trial.
2001	Terrorists attack the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon.
	United States invades Afghanistan in Operation Enduring Freedom.

2002	Playwright Suzan Lori-Parks wins the Pulitzer Prize for Drama for *Topdog/Underdog*.
2003	United States invades Iraq in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and President George W. Bush soon declares the mission accomplished.
2006	The population of the United States hits 300 million.
	Broad Republican defeat in the November elections viewed as repudiation of Bush administration's handling of the Iraqi War.

Introduction

The hope for new lives with new opportunities that brought millions of immigrants to the United States in the past continues today. The United States has always been a nation of immigrants and therefore constantly in flux as new waves of migration from without and within redefined the American experience.

The United States is not the world's biggest country, but most Americans like to think it is and act as if it were. The richness and enormity of American resources make the nation virtually self-sufficient in many areas, most notably in agriculture. With such abundance, Americans are big consumers with generally high incomes, at least by world standards.

"America the Beautiful," a patriotic poem and song by Katharine Lee Bates, sums up Americans' emotion about their homeland: from sea to shining sea, beautiful, spacious skies overlook majestic purple mountains, amber waves of grain, and fruited plains. God shed his light on the United States, where freedom spreads across the wilderness and alabaster cities gleam. When this song is sung at public functions, it is not unusual for the audience to sing along, many with tears in their eyes.

For many Americans, the land itself is proof of a good God and a God-given destiny. Space—unknown and often unowned—gave early Americans in real terms a sense of individual freedom. This is an old tradition. When the Reverend Roger Williams of the Church of England arrived in Boston in 1631, he refused to serve the church there because he no longer believed in an established church. In fact, he had become, like the Puritans he later served

for a while, a separatist, but too radical even for them. He criticized the Massachusetts Bay Company—even questioning the legality of its charter—and the churches. He befriended the natives and supported their ownership of the land. Williams refused to quiet himself or retract his positions and was given six weeks to remove himself from Massachusetts. He found his own space, Providence, where he could practice his own ideas the way he wanted. Eight years later, he had a royal patent for a united Rhode Island. For colonists and the immigrants who followed them, the New World was freedom from the constraints of the Old World and freedom to pursue individual wants and desires in a bountiful land.

It has been said that if something—anything—exists, it can probably be found in the United States. The United States seems to have it all, from all the extremes and everything in between. Americans take pride in this. They are an industrious and inventive people on the go, who value risk taking and its rewards. They like to think that any person born in the United States can grow up to be president, a belief attributable to their sense of independence, self-reliance, fair play, and hard work.

Yet the culture of the United States seems to be filled with contradiction. America fashions itself to be a peace-loving nation, but its armed forces have been involved in some 250 international military actions since the end of the eighteenth century, from Peru to Turkey, the Fiji Islands to Tripoli, Sumatra to Uruguay, and nearly everywhere in between. The U.S. Constitution gives citizens the right to bear arms but does not recognize equal rights for women. Hollywood films have defined American culture internationally, however erroneously, but have never been beyond censorship at home, rights to freedom of artistic expression and free speech aside. In the so-called Land of Equality, African Americans and Latinos earn less than whites, and women earn less than men. White educational attainment far surpasses that of most minority groups. In a society that values scientific advancement, debates about the teaching of evolution in public schools stubbornly persist in school boards across the country. Even presidential candidates have to declare themselves for or against evolution.

These often deep ethnic, economic, political, social, educational, and religious divisions are, however, sources of vitality in American culture. In the end, the culture of the United States is based on a series of compromises, which, taken together, are a source of self-identity and pride for most Americans. Indeed, the Founding Fathers understood this quite well, creating a nation that, from its beginning, declared freedom and liberty for its citizens and let slavery stand. Americans believe they can work out their problems in time.

Americans believe that their country is the best place to live on earth. In spite of the fact that the United States of America occupies a space in the

Americas, specifically North America, only its citizens refer to themselves as Americans. In the U.S. lexicon, Americans do not include Canadians, Venezuelans, Argentineans, Hondurans, or any other citizens of nations in the Americas. Throughout this work, the predilection for U.S. linguistic hegemony is maintained by using the terms *America* and *Americans* to refer only to the United States and its residents.

1

Context: The Land, the People, the Past, the Present

Benjamin F. Shearer

> The United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem.
>
> —Walt Whitman

The United States is a vast land that features most of the geological elements known to humankind: mountains, deserts, swamps, plateaus, glaciers, lakes, rivers, caves, volcanoes, canyons, mesas, seashores, plains, and even geysers and tar pits. The country was patched together over time, not always peaceably, out of Native American territories that had been settled and or claimed by England, France, Holland, Sweden, Spain, Mexico, and Russia. American culture was from the first, therefore, a conglomeration of all these early influences. Africans, brought to America in slavery, and the immigrants who eventually poured into the country from other nations also affected American culture and life from early times.

American culture, always in a state of redefinition, can be understood in terms of the nation's increasingly diverse ethnic groups and the regional variations that engender differences in dialects, food, clothing, the arts, and even religion. Yet beyond ethnic and regional differences, there is something that is distinctly American. The citizens of the United States, clustered largely around the major cities, value the freedom to say what they want, dress as they like, eat what they want, and live where they want. They believe religiously that their hard work will be rewarded with a piece of the American pie.

The Land

Some basic information may help to illustrate the vastness of the United States. The United States occupies 3,794,083 square miles of the earth. About 79,000 square miles of that area are inland water areas made up mostly by the five Great Lakes—Lake Michigan (22,342 square miles), Lake Superior (20,557 square miles), Lake Huron (8,800 square miles), Lake Erie (5,033 square miles), and Lake Ontario (3,446 square miles). Of all the freshwater lakes in the country, and Minnesota alone claims to have 10,000 of them, only two others—Green Bay in Wisconsin and the Great Salt Lake in Utah—have areas of more than 1,000 square miles.[1]

The United States has 58,618 miles of ocean shoreline and 3,962,830 miles of rivers and streams, all feasts for outdoor and sport enthusiasts. Twenty-six of the rivers are over 500 miles long, and 13 are over 1,000 miles long. The Missouri River is the longest at 2,540 miles. It flows from Red Rock Creek in Montana to Missouri, where it dumps into the Mississippi River above St. Louis. It has a drainage area of 529,000 square miles. The Mississippi River, although second in length to the Missouri at 2,340 miles, drains an area of 1,150,000 square miles as it flows from Minnesota to Louisiana. The nation's most obvious topographical feature, it divides and unites the country. Alaska's Yukon River is the third longest at 1,980 miles, and the St. Lawrence and Rio Grande are tied at 1,900 miles.

If these kinds of data are dizzying, it is not much help to break it all down by state. Texas (268,581 square miles), California (163,696 square miles), Montana (147,042 square miles), Florida (65,255 square miles), New Hampshire (9,350 square miles), and New Jersey (8,721 square miles) would all fit handily into the nation's largest state, Alaska, with 663,267 square miles. Imagine the liberating change in mind-set that the western European immigrants who largely populated America underwent. The United Kingdom and Ireland together are the size of New Mexico. France, western Europe's largest nation in area, Denmark, Belgium, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Vatican City, Monaco, and the Netherlands all would fit into Texas. Germany and Switzerland together are smaller than California. Spain, Portugal, and Italy would fit nicely into Montana, Nevada, and Arizona, with room to spare. Less than half of Alaska would be needed to contain Norway and Sweden.

Another perspective might be more useful. From Boston on the Atlantic coast to Los Angeles on the Pacific coast is a 3,406-mile drive—when you get to Kansas City, Missouri, you are about halfway there. (A commercial airline flight is only six and a half hours.) A north–south jaunt from Duluth, Minnesota, to San Antonio, Texas, is 1,415 miles. If you decided to take a drive

from Seattle, Washington, to Prudhoe Bay up on the Arctic Ocean in Alaska, you could do it, but it might be more an adventure than a little drive in the country. Once you get to Anchorage, Alaska's largest city, located in the south on the Gulf of Alaska, after 2,435 miles, you would still have another 847 miles up to your intended destination.[2]

It is astounding that the United States remains a rural country into the twenty-first century, at least in terms of land use. Of America's total land surface of 1,937,700,000 acres (this excludes Alaska and Washington, D.C.), 71.1 percent is rural land that consists of cropland (21.7%), pastureland (6.1%), rangeland (20.9%), and forests (20.9%). The federal government owns 20.7 percent of the nation's land, which includes 91.9 percent of Nevada, 66.5 percent of Utah, 66.4 percent of Idaho, 50.6 percent of Wyoming, and 50.2 percent of Arizona. Water areas occupy 2.6 percent of the land. The remaining 5.5 percent is developed land. America's large urban and built-up areas occupy only 4 percent of that developed land, and if Alaska were included, that figure would, of course, shrink even further.

The geography and climate of the United States provide for an almost easy abundance of bountiful harvests and views of unbridled natural beauty. The coastal plains along the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico have natural ports and inland access through river systems. While the mean elevation of the United States is 2,500 feet above sea level, the Atlantic and Gulf coastal states have very low mean elevations: Delaware, with 60 feet; Georgia, with 100 feet; Florida, with 150 feet; and Louisiana, with 100 feet. The old Appalachian Mountains divide the coastal plains from the broad interior plains, drained by the Mississippi River, that stretch to the Rocky Mountains. The flat to rolling plains are home to America's tremendously productive agricultural industry. Above the central plains, the Canadian Shield, cut up by ancient glaciers, descends, leaving one of the world's largest deposits of iron. The Rockies rise dramatically above the plains. Colorado's mean elevation is 6,800 feet; Wyoming's is 6,700 feet. The Rockies give way westward to interior plateaus that grow wider northward all the way to the Yukon Basin in Alaska. These plateaus, some carved into canyons, are rugged, subject to extreme elevation changes, and have little population. The national parks in this area—Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Glacier—preserve these scenic wonders and make them accessible. There are significant oil shale deposits where Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming meet. Gold, silver, zinc, lead, and uranium have long been mined there.

The Sierra Nevadas and the Cascades form the western borders of the plateaus. California has the highest point of elevation among the 48 contiguous states (Mt. Whitney at 14,495 feet) and the lowest (Death Valley

at 280 feet below sea level), both making for spectacular sights. California's giant redwood and sequoia forests also nicely contrast with its Mojave Desert. Between California's Coast Ranges and the Sierras and Cascades lies the Central Valley, which, with the Puget Sound area and the Willamette Valley, produces a variety of crops more diverse than those grown on America's interior plains. The Cascades have a number of volcanoes, some of which, like those in Alaska and Hawaii, are still active.

The United States is said to have a moderate climate. Generally, this is true, unless standing on a mountaintop, but there are noticeable regional variations. The average daily mean temperature of Boston in New England is 51.6 degrees (Fahrenheit; *Celsius* is another term foreign to Americans). The South's premier city of Atlanta's is 62.2 degrees. The midwestern hub of Chicago's is 49.1 degrees. The mile-high city of Denver's is 50.1 degrees, while Phoenix's is 72.9 degrees. Honolulu's 77.5 degrees is fairly constant. Averages can, however, be somewhat misleading. Summer temperatures in Phoenix frequently rise above 100 degrees, but because the air contains little humidity, the deleterious effect on the human body is somewhat mitigated. The opposite is the case in many southern cities. Miami, with an average daily mean temperature of 76.6 degrees, is quite pleasant in the winter, but in the summer, when humidity levels rise to 90 percent and the temperature to 90 degrees and more, the climate becomes nearly unbearable.

The temperatures in the Midwest are subject to tremendous seasonal variation. Chicago, for example, has a daily mean temperature of 22 degrees in January, but 73.3 degrees in July, whereas Los Angeles has mean temperatures of 57.1 degrees in January and 69.3 degrees in July. The climatic conditions that make the Midwest an agricultural capital—hard freezes in winter that help to break up the soil in spring thaws and hot, humid summers—make life difficult in the extremes of summer and winter. Claims, perhaps spurious, have been made that it is so hot along the Mississippi River in St. Louis during mid-August that car tires will melt. At least eggs can be fried on the street. In Chicago, summer buildups of heat and humidity often lead to the deaths of those who have no air-conditioning or fans. On the other hand, an early February walk down Lakeshore Drive, with the tall buildings on each side tunneling the cold, stiff breeze off Lake Michigan, can only be described as an Arctic version of hell.

Precipitation is generally abundant across the nation. The midwestern agricultural breadbasket averages from 30 to 40 inches of rain per year. Boston averages a bit over 40 inches per year; the southern cities of Mobile, New Orleans, and Miami vie for the title of rainiest city, with Mobile on top at 66.29 inches per year, beating Miami and New Orleans by 8 inches. In the arid

southwest, however, Phoenix averages only about 8 inches of precipitation and Los Angeles a little over 13 inches. Dams and water diversions provide these two major cities with water. Many believe Seattle to be on top of the list of America's rainiest cities, confusing fog, clouds, and drizzle for actual rainfall, which averages only about 37 inches per year.

The United States has made significant progress in improving air quality since 1970, even though it has refused to become a signatory to the international Kyoto Accords, which establish acceptable levels of pollution in an effort to prevent global warming. In the last 30 years of the twentieth century, the United States significantly reduced particulate matter and carbon monoxide emissions. Lead emissions were eliminated. Sulfur dioxide and volatile organic compound emissions were cut in half. Only nitrogen dioxide emissions rose slightly. Particulate matter comes from miscellaneous sources, but the single largest sources of carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds, and nitrogen dioxides are the millions of gasoline and diesel cars, trucks, and off-highway vehicles. Sulfur dioxide is produced in fuel combustion by industries and electrical utilities. In all of these emission categories, however, the ambient air concentrations meet or exceed the government's air quality standards.

Water quality is a different matter. A sampling of American water quality conditions in 2000 revealed that 39 percent of the rivers and streams were polluted, agriculture being the largest contributor of the pollution, and another 8 percent were threatened. Forty-seven percent of the sampled lakes, reservoirs, and ponds were found to be polluted and another 8 percent threatened, mostly by urban runoff and storm sewers, with agriculture as a distant second culprit. Contaminated sediments polluted 78 percent of the shoreline sampled along the Great Lakes.

The quality of life in the United States, like any country, is affected by environmental policy as well as nature's whims, which can sometimes turn violent. Americans, however, tend to view major natural disasters as things that happen only in other countries, mainly third world countries. They believe that nature is something that, with ingenuity, can either be harnessed or avoided. The 29 locks and dams on the Mississippi River between Minneapolis and St. Louis are a prime example. Built during the 1930s, the locks and dams were constructed to maintain a nine-foot ship channel for navigation and to prevent the flooding that had characterized the river's history. Much of the nation's grain harvest is floated to distribution points on barges up and down the river when the waterway is not frozen.

Americans' willingness to tame nature one way or the other has minimized the effects of potentially catastrophic events. In 2002, for example, only 49 Americans lost their lives in floods and flash floods. Lightning killed

51 people. Tornadoes, which occur largely in the South and Midwest in what is called *Tornado Alley,* killed only 55. One hurricane hit the mainland and resulted in 51 deaths. What cannot be controlled can be known. The United States has developed excellent sources of instant information through media—radio, television, Internet, telephone, and cell phone—that can alert people to imminent natural dangers so that they can seek immediate safety or prepare to evacuate.

The horrendous floods, earthquakes, and tsunamis that have taken place around the world, ending tens of thousands of lives, are mediated experiences for Americans, who believe such things could not happen in the United States. Americans typically pour out their hearts and open their wallets for the victims left behind in these tragedies. When Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast in August 2005, Americans saw what looked to all the world like any other natural disaster, with people clinging on to loved ones and whatever belongings they could carry as they tried to escape the ravages of total devastation. Hundreds died along the Gulf Coast from Alabama and Mississippi to Louisiana, and hundreds of thousands were homeless. Most of New Orleans, the place where the good times rolled, was under water.

The American people were no less stunned by this event than they were by the 9/11 terrorist bombings in New York and Washington, D.C. The notion that America, so long isolated geographically from the world's troubles, could be attacked and thousands could lose their lives was unimaginable. The blow to the American psyche was bewildering—Americans had never viewed themselves as powerless victims. Likewise, the natural devastation of New Orleans again made America look and feel powerless, victimized, and unprepared for something that its technology was designed to prevent. It was reported that some people from New Orleans radio stations managed to get back on the air in the midst of the flooding. When one of the broadcasters referred to the wandering homeless as refugees, a fellow broadcaster corrected him with these words: "They are not refugees; they are Americans."

Regions

Suppose you wanted to do a road trip to see the country, got in your car, and began traveling America's nearly 4,000,000 miles of highways. No matter where you set out, what direction you took, or where you stopped, you would experience a kind of American megaculture created by corporate America. It is connected by interstate highways and defined by a common media universe, where English is spoken, dollars are traded, and peaceful commerce is maintained by an overarching belief in American values. From

sea to shining sea, you could overnight at Holiday Inns, Ramadas, Marriotts, Hampton Inns, Days Inns, Hiltons, Econo-Lodges, and Sheratons. You could shop at Wal-Marts (America's biggest employer), J.C. Penneys, Sears, and Targets. You could satisfy your hunger with all-American hamburgers at McDonald's, Wendy's, or Burger King; with chicken at Chick-fil-A, Church's, or Kentucky Fried Chicken; with pizza at Pizza Inn or Pizza Hut; with sandwiches at Subway or Arby's; with fish at Long John Silver's; with steak at Western-Sizzlin or Ponderosa; with Mexican food at Taco Bell; with Italian food at Fazoli's or Olive Garden; with coffee at Starbucks; and with dessert at Baskin & Robbins or Dairy Queen. If you were in the mood for a delightfully tacky yet unrefined dining experience, Hooters would happily fill that need.

There is a certain comfort after traveling hundreds or thousands of miles that the currency has not changed, the language remains understandable, and the Big Mac at McDonald's tastes the same as the Big Mac back home. Indeed, Americans take it for granted and would even expect to converse about the same major news stories with anyone they might meet along the way. This layer of megaculture is a kind of affirmation of America's greatness, values, and way of life. Yet at the same time, it is also a monument to mass production and mass marketing designed to appeal to everyone and offend no one. Beyond the highways and the shopping mall parking lots, the many other layers of racial, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural diversity may be discovered that exist in all the regions of America.

Regions are difficult to define exactly, but there is no doubt that there are regional differences within U.S. culture that are based on early migration patterns, historical and current immigration patterns, topography, climate, and religion. These differences are expressed in language, custom, food, fashion, architecture, leisure activities, and the arts. On a wide scale, most Americans would agree that the nation divides culturally into East, West, North, and South, although to real southerners, any fellow American not a southerner may be considered just another Yankee. There are indeed some variations in the cultural identity of the people in these four broad regions. Fifty-five percent of African Americans in the United States live in the South. Forty-nine percent of Asians and 55 percent of Mexicans live in the West. Forty percent of Americans who claim heritage of two or more races also live in the West.

Certainly, within and around these rather artificial boundaries are unique cultural areas. The East may be further divided between the Mid-Atlantic states and the states of New England, each area having evolved from different historical roots. The Midwest, in the center of the country, defies the easy boundary of the Mississippi River, straddling both its shores. Southern coastal

culture differs from the culture of the Deep South. What might be called the *Northlands* near the Canadian border and in Alaska are sparsely populated lands that are unique and not easily classed into four regions. Some have spoken of the space between Boston and Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles and San Diego as being essentially densely populated megacities, gigantic cities of population centers of millions tied together by transportation lines and an urban culture. The mountain areas of Appalachia and the Ozarks have developed distinctive cultures during years of relative isolation. The Pacific Northwest, also geographically isolated during its early development, has developed special characteristics distinct from the general western culture. Certainly, the Southwest has likewise developed a regional culture that is neither entirely western nor southern.

One problem with trying to identify regions is that they have fuzzy boundaries. Another is that if you ask Americans how they identify themselves when asked where they are from, Texans will say Texas and Californians will say California. Alaskans do not identify themselves as westerners, and neither do Hawaiians. No one from a Mid-Atlantic state will identify himself or herself as a Mid-Atlantican. Yet New Englanders, southerners, midwesterners, and westerners do identify strongly with their regions. A buckeye from Ohio may just as well say "I'm from the Midwest" as "I'm from Ohio." Only circumstance would determine the answer. If the Ohioan is talking with a fellow midwesterner, Ohio would be the obvious choice for the answer. If, however, a New York City native asks where he is from, the buckeye will answer that he is from the Midwest, in deference to the known fact that that New Yorkers have a skewed geographical sense of anything west of the Hudson River.

New England

New England is the prototypical picture of an idyllic America to many Americans. Including the states of Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, New England is home to small towns with steepled churches, small farms, town meetings, and craggy landscapes from its mountains to its shoreline. It is in many senses the birthplace of America—its democracy, its literature, its poetry, its spirit. Plymouth Rock in Massachusetts marks the landing of the first Pilgrims in America, and the Old North Bridge marks the beginning of the American Revolution. New Hampshire's motto, "Live Free, or Die," sums up the spirit of New England independence in stark choices. New England spawned Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Herman Melville. Another son of New England, writer Henry David Thoreau,

is a national symbol of American independence and Americans' love of its natural landscape.

With 6,130 miles of shoreline, life in New England has always been tied closely to the sea. Whaling at one time was big business; fishing has always been. Clam chowder and codfish remain culinary highlights of New England fare. No one has ever visited Maine without eating a lobster or visiting one of the lighthouses that line the rugged and rocky Maine coast. Cape Cod possesses miles of beautiful sandy beaches and its own architectural style. Shipbuilding, not surprisingly, has been a mainstay of New England industry, supported by forests that cover the interior.

The highest point in New England is Mt. Washington, 6,288 feet in elevation. It is situated in New Hampshire's White Mountains, which, like the Green Mountains of Vermont and the Berkshire Hills in Massachusetts, seem like tame little hillocks compared to the Rockies and the Sierra Nevadas out West. Yet these beautiful mountains and the streams that flow from them provide incredible outdoor recreational opportunities. Skiing is a major industry in winter, and there is usually plenty of snow. Nature walks, fishing, canoeing, kayaking, and rock climbing are popular leisure activities in the

Covered bridges and colorful fall foliage add to the idyllic image of New England. Getty Images/PhotoDisc.

less frozen months, but L.L. Bean will certainly have the right boots and clothing for any New England outdoors enthusiast.

Boston is New England's premier city. It is a financial, educational, and cultural center, with a history dating back to 1630. Boston's natural harbor has been the entry point for millions of new Americans and the export point for New England manufactured products. That harbor was the site of one of the colonists' first major protests against England, the Boston Tea Party. The Freedom Trail that winds through Boston for a couple miles passes some of the colonial landmarks in the birth of American democracy. Boston's nickname, "Beantown," commemorates its Puritan past—the Puritans were said to have served and eaten beans frequently.

The Mid-Atlantic

The Mid-Atlantic states of Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey, and New York share a colonial heritage with the New England states. Delaware declared its independence from Pennsylvania and Great Britain in 1776, thus becoming the thirteenth colony and, finally, the first state. Although all these states were part of the original British colonies, they were much more culturally diverse than New England. New York began as a Dutch colony, Delaware was full of Swedish settlements, Quakers controlled Pennsylvania, and Roman Catholics were in Maryland. The Mid-Atlantic states, therefore, never shared New England's Puritan heritage.

Four very different major cities dominate the Mid-Atlantic states, three of them—New York City, Philadelphia, and Baltimore—being major ports for commerce and immigration. Washington, D.C., or the District of Columbia, is the nation's capital city. New York City is America's truly international city. With 578 miles of waterfront, an excellent harbor, access to the Great Lakes from the Hudson and Mohawk river systems, and service from three airports, New York City is a major commercial and transportation hub. There are over 1,000,000 flights from New York's airports each year. It is the financial center of the country, if not the world, and home to the New York Stock Exchange and many major banks. The city gave birth to America's film industry, and it remains the cultural capital of American theater, fashion, art, architecture, advertising, and media.

New York City has long welcomed the "huddled masses yearning to be free" to American shores. The Statue of Liberty in New York harbor is an important American icon, an enduring symbol of freedom. New York City has never stopped accepting new people. Today, 36 percent the people who live within the city's 303 square miles were born outside of the United States, and 48 percent speak a language other than English at home. Twenty-seven percent of the people are Hispanic or Latino, and 10 percent are Asian. Like

many international cities around the globe, New York City represents the world's diversity in microcosm. It is home to over 400 ethnic neighborhoods, where more than 100 languages are spoken.

It seems that everything in New York City is bigger and better than anywhere else, at least according to one noted Manhattan real estate developer. More than 40,000,000 people visit the city each year, staying in its 70,545 hotel rooms and spending more than $21,000,000,000. There are over 17,300 restaurants and 12,000 licensed taxis; 4,465 buses make 44,550 trips per day over 1,871 miles of bus routes carrying 2,200,000 people on the average workday; 6,247 subway cars make 7,400 trips a day over 685 miles of track carrying 4,800,000 people a day to work, picking them up and dropping them off at 490 stations. The Staten Island ferry makes 104 trips a day with 70,000 passengers.[3]

In a very real sense, New York City is bigger than its boundaries. New York's major art museums—the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney—are national treasures. The Metropolitan Opera is America's premier opera house. Its ballet companies belong to the nation, not just to New York City. Broadway plays and musicals, which are attended by more than 11,000,000 theatergoers each year, define American theater.[4] They frequently find a wider audience in film and become the stuff of high school, college, and community theater performances throughout America. With the headquarters of traditional network television companies in New York City, news and entertainment programming as well as commercials spread across America, serving to unite the country in a certain universe of shared information. There are more than 100 soundstages in the city. Some 40,000 films, television shows, music videos, and commercials are filmed there every year.

Like New York City, Philadelphia had the advantage of a good port and an accessible hinterland that promoted its growth. Philadelphia lies between the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers. Independence Hall is an icon of American democracy—the place where independence was born. While there is still some evidence of William Penn's carefully laid out rectangles in his design of the city, Philadelphia now appears to be a sprawling, meandering metropolis, America's sixth largest city. The evidence, however, of Penn's Quaker roots and the early immigration of Germans to the Philadelphia area abounds. Quaker or Friends' meetinghouses can be found all over the countryside, and soft pretzel vendors seem to be on every city street corner. In Philadelphia, by the way, soft pretzels are to be eaten with mustard. North and west of the city is Pennsylvania Dutch country, which, of course, is not Dutch, but Deutsch, that is, German. German and Swiss pietistic sects were welcome in tolerant Pennsylvania. Today, Amish and Mennonite communities thrive there.

Pittsburgh is Pennsylvania's second largest city. Its skyline is dotted with skyscrapers and many bridges, as the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers merge to form the Ohio River within the city. Corbis.

Maryland shares with Pennsylvania a history of religious toleration. Quakers settled in Maryland as well as Pennsylvania, and Amish communities remain in both states. Baltimore, Maryland's largest city, has the distinction of being the first Roman Catholic archdiocese in the United States, organized in 1808. Now in the midst of revitalization, Baltimore's Inner Harbor has become a major tourist destination on the coast. While Baltimore, with a population of 629,000, is a major Atlantic port, it lacks the developed supporting hinterland that allowed cities like New York and Philadelphia to develop. Black urban migration from the South helped the city's population to swell at one time—African Americans number 64.3 percent of Baltimoreans—but the city actually lost 11.5 percent of its population in the last decade of the twentieth century. On the other hand, the Maryland suburbs around the nation's capital—Silver Spring, Bethesda, Chevy Chase—seem to have grown exponentially and are stark contrasts to Maryland's eastern shore, a bucolic area on the shore of Chesapeake Bay where Maryland crab cakes are served in abundance.

Washington, D.C., only 35 miles from Baltimore, is surrounded by Maryland, which donated the land for a federal capital. Washington, like Philadelphia, is a planned city, but not with the rectilinear clarity of old Philadelphia.

Washington is designed as a series of wheels (traffic circles) and connecting spokes (major arteries) that serve to confound most tourists driving in the district. Happily, tourists do not have to drive because the subway system is easy to use and gets tourists to the district's many attractions as well as people to work.

It is an American rite of passage to visit the nation's capital. A trip to Washington is often the first family vacation many children remember. It is a lesson in citizenship. The Constitution and the Declaration of Independence are on display at the National Archives in what feels like a temple's most sacred space. Visits to the neoclassical buildings that house the three branches of government—the U.S. Capitol, the Supreme Court, and the White House—recall the ancient world's democracies, which America consciously replaced. The museums chronicle the development of American technology and display America's artistic riches and cultural heritage. Memorials to past presidents—Jefferson, Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt—and the heroes of American wars make patriotic hearts stir.

Regional definitions have blurred somewhat owing to the extensive urban and suburban growth along the East Coast from north of Boston all the way to the nation's capital. A trip south down multilane Interstate 95 from

Millions of visitors come to the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. every year. Many make pencil rubbings of the names of family members or loved ones whose lives were lost during the Vietnam War. Getty Images/PhotoDisc.

Portsmouth, New Hampshire, around Boston and through Providence, Rhode Island, on further through Fairfield and Stamford, Connecticut, into New York and past New York City to Newark, New Jersey, then right through Philadelphia, past Wilmington, Delaware, under the Fort McHenry Tunnel at Baltimore, and finally to Washington, D.C. will prove exciting or harrowing, depending on one's psychic disposition. There is plenty of time for sightseeing from the car while under way, unless trucks block the view, because the multiple lanes of the highway are randomly closed every few miles to repair parts of the road that have crumbled under the weight of millions of tons of daily traffic, salt to melt ice in the winter, and the natural effects of winter freezing and spring thaws. Thus, during the frequent stops and starts of an I-95 adventure, the sightseer will find it nearly impossible, save for highway signs, to tell one city from the next or where one city begins and another ends as suburban sprawl blends together any sense of boundaries.

The South

The South includes the states of Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, and the eastern part of Texas as well as parts of Missouri and Oklahoma. Most of the South is unique among America's regions because it once seceded from the Union to establish the Confederate States of America. The Civil War served to solidify from within and without the identity of southerners as regionally separate.

Today, the South refers to itself as the New South. The Old South of white-haired, white-suited colonels sitting in rocking chairs on the verandas of their plantation houses and sipping mint juleps with favored ladies in pastel hoop skirts exists only in tourist attractions. Indeed, this old stereotype never explained the complexity of the South that southern writers like William Faulkner, Eudora Welty, and Flannery O'Connor understood and portrayed so well. There was never one South. Within the southern region, there are cultural variations among the Gulf Coast, the southern highlands, the Georgia-Carolinas Piedmont, and the northern interior. Certainly the Creoles and Cajuns in French Catholic Louisiana never quite fit the old stereotype.

Some remnants of the Old South do persist. The New South is still filled with cotton fields, peanut fields, and farms with tobacco allotments. Southern hospitality remains a valued commodity that is only enhanced by a southern drawl. Grits, biscuits, and red-eye gravy can still be found on southern breakfast menus, pork is still more popular than beef, and Carolina-grown rice is still preferred to potatoes. Country music, centered in Nashville, Tennessee, is still preferred on the region's radio stations. Yet the New South is being radically transformed. The South has, for the first

time since it was settled by whites mostly of British extraction and blacks extricated from their homelands to be New World slaves, become a preferred destination for immigrants of all kinds. The tired, pastoral, slow Old South has given way to a New South of broad diversity and opportunity that is on the go. America's corporate megaculture is as much part of the New South as any other region. Northerners have flocked to the Sunbelt for jobs and warmer weather in what is now a diversified southern economy. Even African Americans whose families earlier forsook the black codes and hopelessness of the Old South have begun returning. The internal migration to the South, at the expense of northern cities, has been so extensive as to endanger the famed southern accent in the booming southern cities. The South has finally become integrated into the rest of the nation.

The city of Atlanta, left in flames after the Civil War, is the symbol and the proof of southern renewal. All roads in the South seem to lead to Atlanta, whose metropolitan population grew over 38 percent from 1990 to 2000 and whose skyscrapers put to rest the stereotype of the Old South and the Atlanta of *Gone with the Wind.* Atlanta, with over 4,600,000 people, was the center of America's civil rights movement and is now America's ninth largest metro area, with more than 1,000 international businesses located there.[5] The Coca-Cola Company, whose trademarks have worldwide recognition, has long been headquartered in Atlanta. Many southerners consider a Coke a suitable if not preferable alternative to a morning cup of coffee. Coke became so ubiquitous in the South that many southerners still use the word "Coke" to refer to any soft drink. Entrepreneur Ted Turner, who founded Turner Broadcasting Company, made Atlanta a cable-broadcasting center with CNN and affiliated networks. The Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is one of America's busiest, with over 83,000,000 passengers passing through it each month.[6]

While Atlanta is the South's inland hub, the South also enjoys a number of important seaports. Norfolk and Newport News, Virginia, are situated at the mouth of Chesapeake Bay. On down the Atlantic coast, Wilmington, North Carolina, Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia, are major ports. Charleston, a planned city dating from 1680, and Savannah have managed to preserve the feel and architecture of the Old South. Florida has two major seaports on the Atlantic: Jacksonville and Miami. Jacksonville, a financial capital, has the distinction of being America's largest city in terms of area—841 square miles. Miami can be said to be one of America's international cities, but with a decided southern orientation. It is the point of entry for Caribbean and South American tourism and immigration. Miami, with a heavy influence of Cuban culture, has become a center of Spanish language broadcasting and Hispanic fashion in America. Miami has also experienced a large Haitian immigration.

Miami's beaches in Florida are an American paradise for travelers. Getty Images/ PhotoDisc.

Florida real estate was the subject of skeptical humor even before the Marx brothers made fun of it in their 1929 movie *The Cocoanuts.* Yet buying "some swamp land in Florida" turned out to be a good investment for most. Florida beaches are among the best in the world, and there are miles and miles of them. Retirees have flocked to south Florida from the cold North. About 18 percent of Florida's population is age 65 or older. Orange groves in central Florida have been diminishing to make way for tourist attractions that draw international clientele. Orlando is now a golfing mecca that is also home to Walt Disney World Resort, the Universal Orlando Resort, Sea World Orlando, Discovery Cove, and Cypress Gardens. Tourist dollars fuel Florida's economy and make a state income tax anathema to Florida legislators.

Tampa is a major port on Florida's Gulf Coast, which features Busch Gardens among its many tourist attractions. Mobile, Alabama, New Orleans, and Houston are other important ports along the Gulf of Mexico. With the exception of these cities, the Gulf Coast is generally populated sparsely. Fishing has traditionally been a major enterprise in the small towns along the coastline. The discovery of oil and natural gas deposits in the gulf, however,

have made the energy industry and related industries the basis of most of the coast's economy. Refineries and chemical and paper plants surround the coast from Mobile to Corpus Christi. Unfortunately, the hot and humid Gulf Coast, which rises little above sea level, has a continuing history of being ravaged by hurricanes. When the 2005 hurricane season knocked out part of the Gulf Coast's energy exploration, refining, and transportation capabilities, the entire nation felt the squeeze of higher fuel prices and shortages.

The Gulf Coast from Mobile through Louisiana shared a very different history from the interior South. Mobile and New Orleans were French cities, which meant that Roman Catholicism took root there from the earliest colonial times, rather than the evangelical Protestantism that flourished in most of the South. By 1820, French Jesuits were operating a Roman Catholic college in Mobile. Along the coast and most notably around New Orleans, French, Spanish, white, black, and native cultures created an ethnic jambalaya unlike anywhere else in America or, for that matter, in the world.

The east Texas cities of Houston and Dallas are major cultural and financial centers whose tall buildings reflect the gleaming Texas sun. Thanks in great part to the television series *Dallas,* we tend to think of big oil and big cattle when we think of this part of Texas, but agriculture and industry have

The Alamo in San Antonio, Texas remains a symbol of liberty and freedom even today. Getty Images/PhotoDisc.

built these gigantic and growing cities, too. The Dallas–Fort Worth metropolitan area is the fifth largest in America; Houston's is the eighth largest. In Texas, we begin to see a transition from southern culture into southwestern culture, and not just in the substitution of boots for dress shoes and Stetsons for baseball caps. In the cities of Houston and Dallas, the white population is about 50 percent, and the African American population is about 25 percent, but over one-third of each city's population claims a Hispanic or Latino heritage. In San Antonio, a city of 1,200,000 people about 200 miles southwest of Houston, the white population approaches 68 percent, the African American population is less than 7 percent, and 59 percent of the population are of Hispanic or Latino origin.

The Midwest

The states of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Kansas, eastern Colorado, and parts of Missouri and western Pennsylvania make up America's Midwest, its breadbasket. Chicago is its center. The influence of the many Germans who settled in Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, and Wisconsin, the Swedes and Norwegians in Wisconsin and Minnesota, and southern African Americans in the larger Midwestern cities can still be felt. Chicago has the largest Polish population of any city outside of Poland. Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer were, in a sense, born on the Mississippi River. Midwesterners are down-to-earth folks who speak plainly and straightforwardly in the preferred accent of the national media. Midwesterners will tell you they have no accent. The Midwest is steak and potatoes country.

If it is true that southerners would have to go through Atlanta even to get to heaven, Midwesterners would have to go through Chicago. Incorporated as a town with a population of 350 in 1833, it was a city of over 4,000 people four years later. Now with a population of nearly 3,000,000 living on 228 square miles of land, Chicago claims the world's busiest airport, O'Hare International, the world's largest convention center, McCormick Place, the world's largest food festival, the Taste of Chicago, and the world's biggest parochial school system, which is run by the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Chicago.

Chicago's geographical location in the middle of the country and its 29 miles of lakefront on Lake Michigan helped to make it a transportation hub and a gigantic manufacturing and industrial power. Long the nation's second city to New York City, Chicago has typified the trend among large Midwestern cities of losing population as southern, southwestern, and western cities continue to grow. Chicago lost its second city status to Los Angeles in the later twentieth century, but the years of New York–Chicago rivalry

caused Chicagoans to start counting everything in sight to prove theirs was no tiny toddlin' town. They counted 148,000 manholes and 47,330 fire hydrants on 3,780 miles of streets. They found 4,300 miles of sewer mains, 4,290 miles of water mains, and even 6,400 bike racks. Chicago's 30,000,000 visitors each year could enjoy 560 parks, 200 live theaters, 49 museums, and more than 7,000 restaurants and 200 annual parades.[7]

The Midwest includes what is commonly called *America's industrial heartland* or, perhaps somewhat pejoratively, the *Rust Belt.* The fact is that in the Midwest, manufacturing and farming live closely together. In addition to Chicago, the cities of Cleveland, Ohio, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Cincinnati, Ohio, and Detroit, Michigan, grew to become large manufacturing centers. The Ohio River Valley and the Great Lakes helped to create these industrial cities, empowered by the needs of local agriculture. Pittsburgh means steel; Detroit means automobiles; Milwaukee means beer; Kansas City means beef; and St. Louis is the gateway to the West.

The Midwest is also called *Middle America* and includes the Corn Belt, filled with small towns separated by lots of open space. The towns are populated with people who have solid and independent values. Hot summers and cold winters combine with rather flat land and generally good soil to create some of the most abundant agricultural land in the world. Corn, wheat, and soybeans are the major crops. Raising hogs and cattle augment income from grain farming. There is extensive dairy farming in Wisconsin and Minnesota above the plains. Wisconsin produces about 50 percent of the cheese in America. Fruit orchards dot the western Great Lakes. The family farm is disappearing, but the Corn Belt is still about 80 percent farmland, notably in places like Illinois and Iowa.[8]

The Midwestern states of Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, and North Dakota lie in the Great Plains. The plains extend from Texas up into Canada, with eastern boundaries that roughly straddle the western limits of Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, and Minnesota. Portions of eastern New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, and much of Montana also lie within the plains. The High Plains stretch from south Texas into southern Nebraska. Tornadoes and tremendous thunderstorms rule this area, which is hot in summer and cold in winter. Buffalo herds once roamed these grassy prairies. Not even the Indians much settled there. Ranching became the thing—hard winter wheat in the south and spring wheat in the north plains. In the north, barley and oats are major second crops, along with sunflowers.

The West

The West covers a lot of territory: the interior states of Wyoming, Montana, Utah, Idaho, and western Colorado; the Pacific Northwest states of Oregon,

Washington, and Alaska; Hawaii; and most of California. The interior states of the West are perhaps most emblematic of the American pioneer tradition. They have small populations that are largely white and non-Hispanic. Wyoming, for example, is typical of the area, with a little over 500,000 people, 89 percent of whom are non-Hispanic whites. The land does not give way to an easy existence, but the people there seem to have a certain open and welcoming friendliness that leaves no room for pretension. Wyoming gave women, equal toilers on the frontier, the right to vote in 1869. The Rocky Mountains rise out of the Great Plains in Wyoming, and the Continental Divide cuts directly through it. Although raising cattle and sheep and growing a few crops have always been essential parts of Wyoming life, agriculture lags behind mining and mineral extraction in Wyoming's economy. Wyoming is the nation's largest coal producer. Its national parks—Yellowstone and Grand Teton—and its national monuments—Devil's Tower and Fossil Butte—help to place tourism second in importance to the state's economy. Millions of acres of national forests are also located in Wyoming. Wyoming is truly the land where the antelope roam.

Montana, stretching to 559 miles east to west along the Canadian border and 321 miles north to south, calls itself Big Sky Country. Its western third lies in the Rocky Mountains, where the Continental Divide descends; the remaining part of the state lies in the Great Plains. Around 65 percent of Montana is occupied by ranches and farms whose major products are wheat and beef. Twenty-five percent of the state is covered by forests, thus making the timber industry important to the local economy, but tourism is second only to agriculture. Glacier National Park is an important destination, but Montana has over 17,000,000 acres of public land and seven Indian reservations. Montana also contains immense coal deposits.[9] Idaho, on the western side of the Continental Divide, is filled with scenic rivers and streams that make whitewater rafting a simple pleasure.

Utah has some of the nation's highest peaks but is better known for the Great Salt Lake, a briny remnant of an ancient freshwater lake, and the desert next to it. For most pioneers, Utah held little promise for settlement. For the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, however, Utah became the Promised Land on earth after a long and arduous exodus from persecution in Illinois.

California

California is larger in area and has a larger gross domestic product than most nations. Like the northeast coast's megacity, the area between Santa Barbara and San Diego is California's answer, a blur of cities and suburbs that seem to make one gigantic metropolis with almost imperceptible boundaries.

California is a land of beautiful coasts along the Pacific Ocean, mountains, broad valleys, southeastern deserts, and northern forests. The Coast Ranges line the coast along fault zones that make California prone to earthquakes. The Central Valley, which is east of the ranges, is agriculturally rich. The valley is a distinct geological feature that was formed between the Coast Ranges and the rugged Sierra Nevadas by drainage of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers. More than 430 miles long and, on average, 50 miles in width, thanks to the damming of rivers and streams and irrigation, the valley is one of America's richest agricultural regions. The abundance of crops grown there include almonds, barley, corn, cotton, grapes, oats, pistachios, rice, sorghum, sugar beets, sunflowers, tomatoes, walnuts, and wheat.[10] Railroads and the discovery of oil also fueled the valley's growth and the development of its cities—Bakersfield, Fresno, Merced, Stockton, Sacramento, Chico, and Redding. North of the Central Valley is a plateau that contains volcanoes, notably Mount Shasta and Mount Lassen. Northern California gets more precipitation than the south, where irrigation is needed to support agricultural crops. In fact, water for Los Angeles is supplied through two aqueducts. The 1913 aqueduct is 223 miles long; the 1970 aqueduct is 137 miles long. Fires in dry Southern California, where there are major oil fields, are sometimes driven by strong winds. The Imperial Valley in Southern California can grow crops all year. Grapes are grown around San Francisco in California's famed wine country; flowers are grown in the Lompoc Valley; oranges and lemons are grown around the Los Angeles Basin. Specialty crops add to the fresh cuisine of California.

Los Angeles and San Francisco are California's two main urban hubs. They are very different cities. Los Angeles, America's second largest city, with 3,800,000 people and a metro population of almost 13,000,000, is a coagulation of cities connected by freeways with no real center. The manmade port of Los Angeles–Long Beach is the major West Coast import-export point. While Hollywood and the entertainment industry give it its glitter, Los Angeles retains its affinity with the Southwest. Although the Asian population is 10 percent of the total, some 47 percent of the population claims Hispanic, mostly Chicano, heritage; 58 percent of the people do not speak English at home; and 41 percent were born outside of the country. The Los Angeles *barrio,* a word that simply means "neighborhood," has an area of 193 square miles and a population of almost 2,000,000 people.

San Francisco is a more traditional city of a bit more than 750,000 people and a metro population of 4,100,000. San Francisco's Hispanic population is only about 14 percent, in sharp contrast to Los Angeles. Its Asian population, however, is nearly 31 percent. The San Francisco Bay area, home to Silicon

Valley and award-winning wines, is one of America's most scenic places, with an excellent harbor that is a gateway for Asian immigration.

Hawaii

Hawaii, an archipelago of volcanoes that stretches west from the big island more than 1,800 miles, has long been an entry point for Asian immigration. Only about 114,000 of its 1,263,000 inhabitants are native islanders. Asians outnumber whites five to three. Hawaii, the big island, is two-thirds of the landmass. Nearly all the population lives on the eight main islands: Hawaii, Oahu, Maui, Kauai, Lanai, Molokai, Niihau, and Kahoolawe. The state controls most of the land, about 80 percent. Hawaii is in the middle of nowhere: some 3,600 miles from Tokyo and 2,100 miles from San Francisco. Kilauea and Mauna Loa are the most famous volcanoes on the big island. With a consistently temperate climate, tourism is a central economic force. Hawaiian music, the hula, and the luau have long been a staple of American culture that is constantly reinforced in film and on television. When mainland Americans think about Hawaii, they typically picture the big blue waves offshore—surfing is the state individual sport—and recall the tastes of pineapples, Kona coffee, and macadamia nuts.

The Pacific Northwest

The three states of the Pacific Northwest are home to about 10,000,000 Americans. Portland, Oregon, and Seattle, Washington, are the main cities, characterized by white populations of over 70 percent. Both have good harbors, and both are industrial centers. There is high rainfall along the rugged coast that produces tall evergreens—Douglas firs, red cedar, and Sitka spruce—and the valleys created between the Coast Ranges and the volcanic Cascades, the Willamette in Oregon and the Puget Sound lowlands in Washington, provide agricultural opportunities. East of the Cascades, which make up two-thirds of Oregon and half of Washington, the climate is rather arid. The Columbia River provides needed irrigation as well as hydroelectric power. Like the dams on the Mississippi River, the 11 dams on the Columbia, including Bonneville and Grand Coulee, are further tributes to American can-do engineering in the conquering of nature.

Lumber and the fur trade built the Pacific Northwest, isolated as it once was on the northwest tip of the country, but Boeing and Microsoft now help to sustain it. The spirit of independence that relative isolation promoted can still be felt there. It is as if the Pacific Northwest were its own separate country. It could produce everything from apples to milk and cheese, hops to spearmint, and even grapes to grow its own wine industry. Wheat is a major crop in the hilly Palouse of Washington, and farming is a major undertaking

Alaska is one of America's many natural treasures, full of national parks, lakes, and glaciers. Mt. McKinley, found in Alaska, is North America's tallest mountain. Getty Images/PhotoDisc.

in the Columbia Plateau on the Oregon-Washington border. Even with the diminution of the importance of the salmon business, the Pacific Northwest nonetheless has created its own cuisine based on the fresh foods available there. It is an environmentally friendly place where strangers are welcome, but not asked to stay.

Alaska, the largest state in the United States in terms of land, is popularly thought to be the land of Eskimos, which, of course, it is. Yet today, these native people account for only about 22 percent of the state's sparsely populated territory. Whites constitute some 71 percent of the total population, and the city of Anchorage contains some 40 percent of the state's entire population. While the fishing and oil and gas industries are very important to the Alaskan economy, the vast majority of Alaska's people are engaged in the service sector. Alaska is a gorgeous yet forbidding land. Tourism is a major summer industry as visitors come to the Land of the Midnight Sun to see the wonders of its many national parks and preserves, its thousands of lakes and glaciers, and its hundreds of islands. Mt. McKinley in the Alaska Range reaches 20,320 feet, the highest elevation in the United States. Alaska truly is America's Last Frontier.

The Southwest

The Southwest includes the states of New Mexico, Arizona, and Nevada as well as southern interior California, west Texas, and parts of Oklahoma. The Rio Grande River is one of its defining characteristics. Flowing south out of snow-packed mountains in Colorado, the Rio Grande cuts through New Mexico and, north of El Paso, Texas, forms a 1,250-mile border with Mexico as it makes its way southeasterly to the Gulf of Mexico near Brownsville.

The Falcon Dam above Mission and the Amistad Dam above Del Rio have helped to mitigate the severe flooding that had been common downstream. In New Mexico, the reservoirs formed by the Elephant Butte and Caballo dams provide sources for irrigation. The Rio Grande remains the lifeblood of this part of the region, one of the few available sources of water to sustain human, animal, and plant life.

The plains, mountains, deserts, rivers, and canyons of the generally arid Southwest provide some of America's most dramatic landscapes and vital natural resources. The plains that stretch northwest beyond the Texas border from San Antonio and Dallas through Midland and Lubbock are cowboy country and home to immense herds of cattle, even some of the famous Texas longhorn cattle, on gigantic ranches. It is also oil country. Texas continues to be a major oil and natural gas producer, especially since the development of resources off the coast in the Gulf of Mexico. Oil built both Midland and Houston.

New Mexico calls itself the Land of Enchantment with good reason. Its eastern plains, punctuated by the Carlsbad Caverns to the south, give way to the red Sangre de Cristo (blood of Christ) Mountains in the north and the San Andres Mountains west of the Pecos River as it wends southward. The White Sands National Monument southwest of Alamogordo appears as mounds and mounds of sugar dunes, but it is really gypsum. On the western side of the Rio Grande, the Jemez Mountains and the Black Range cozy up to the Continental Divide, which roughly parallels the Rio Grande. As the desert continues from the southwestern part of the state, forests of pines and firs lie along the hills to the Black Range and the Mogollon Mountains. The northwestern New Mexico desert includes Indian lands and the otherworldly Bisti Badlands Wilderness Area.

In New Mexico, perhaps more than in any other southwestern state, the mix of native, Mexican, and Anglo cultures has coexisted for so long that it is often impossible to identify which culture contributed what. New Mexico had the greatest number of Hispanic settlers of all the old Spanish territory America took after the Mexican War. Evidence remains of their adobe homes as well as the pueblos of the natives. Beans, corn, and chilis are the basic staples of the cuisine of both cultures. In fact, red chilis are one of New Mexico's major crops. Four tribes have reservations of over 400,000 acres in New Mexico: the Jicarilla Apache, the Keresan, the Mescalero Apache, and the Zuni. Although the Anglo culture predominates overall, it developed its own distinctive southwestern flavor.

Arizona is the Grand Canyon State. The Colorado River cuts across northwestern Arizona to the Nevada line, then to the Hoover Dam, where it flows south eventually to form Arizona's border with California. The Grand

Canyon is perhaps America's best-known, most photographed and painted natural wonder, but Arizona is filled with natural wonders. Giant saguaro cacti populate the southeast. The Canyon de Chelly on the Navajo Reservation in northeast Arizona is as breathtaking as the Grand Canyon. The Petrified Forest east of Holbrook and the Painted Desert above Flagstaff are uniquely beautiful. The burgeoning city of Phoenix is surrounded by desert, copper mines, and Indian reservations. There are 18 federal reservations in the state. The Navajo Reservation is by far the largest, occupying nearly 14,000,000 acres. The Tohono O'Odham (Papago) Reservation is almost 2,800,000 acres; the San Carlos Reservation of the Apache tribe is 1,800,000 acres; the Fort Apache Reservation is 1,600,000 acres; and the Hopi Reservation is 1,500,000 acres. The rest are considerably smaller.

Nevada is situated in the ancient seabed called the *Great Basin.* It is extremely dry, with a landscape that sometimes resembles Mars with scrub brush. Yet the Great Basin National Park shows off the natural beauty of the basin, and Lake Tahoe's forests and clear water are jolting contrasts from the desert. Silver and gold made Nevada; the gambling and tourism industries sustain it. Glittering Las Vegas rises out of the desert on borrowed water, promoting itself as a place where what happens there, stays there—as if the

Known around the world for its beauty, the Grand Canyon is only one of the southwest's precious sites. Getty Images/PhotoDisc.

tourists were prospectors who had just hit the mother lode and came to town to have a night on the town. The Wild West lives on.

The Appalachians and Ozarks

Of special note are two cultural regions that lie within the larger regions. They are notable for their traditionally isolated mountain culture. The Appalachian Mountains are a series of what the locals call hills that stretch from northeastern Alabama to southern New York. They encompass western portions of North Carolina and Virginia, northern Georgia, eastern Tennessee and Kentucky, southeastern Ohio, all of West Virginia, and central and northeastern Pennsylvania. The Blue Ridge Mountains form the eastern boundary. The Central Valley then gives way to the Appalachian Plateau, with the Allegheny Front to the east of the valley. The Shenandoah Valley provides the only viable agricultural land in Appalachia. Coal mining in southeastern Kentucky, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and western Virginia has provided a means of income for this otherwise poor area of small farms, but at no small cost to the health and safety of the miners. The Appalachians began to be populated in the 1730s by English, Scottish, and Welsh settlers. They were later joined by the Scotch-Irish from Ulster. Their enthusiastic Protestant religion proliferated into tens of sects just among Baptists. The Appalachians became involved in the Great Awakening that began in the 1740s and lasted for about 80 years. Camp meetings—tent revivals were a mainstay of Appalachia by the early 1800s—and the emotive gospel music, featuring Old World fiddles, merged with bluegrass and became what we call today country music. The Ozarks were settled largely by Appalachian people who migrated westward. The Ozarks extend from central Missouri through northern Arkansas and into eastern Oklahoma and mark the only significant hills in America's midsection. Ozark culture features many of the same characteristics as Appalachian culture, and both have preserved folk crafts and music from an earlier period.

The People

There are about 300,000,000 people in the United States now, ranking it third behind China and India, each with populations of more than 1,000,000,000 people. However, the population density of China is 359 per square mile, and of India, 914 per square mile. In the United States, on the other hand, there are only 82 people per square mile, well below the world figure of 125. This is attributable not only to the vastness of the country, but also to its generally temperate climate save for interior and northern Alaska. Russia, for example, has almost twice the landmass of the United States, but

much of the land is uninhabitable, thus leaving it with only 22 people per square mile. Canada, with about the same area as the United States, has only nine people per square mile.

California is the most populous state, with 35,484,000 people (228 per square mile), followed by Texas, with 22,119,000 (84.5 per square mile); New York, with 19,190,000 (407 per square mile); Florida, with 17,019,000 (316 per square mile); and Illinois, with 12,654,000 (228 per square mile). New Jersey is the most crowded state, with 1,165 people per square mile, and Rhode Island is a close second, with 1,030 people per square mile. Wyoming has the least population of all the states at 501,000, with only 5.2 people per square mile. Alaska has the most wide open spaces, with only 1.1 persons per square mile.

The legacy of spaciousness can be found in Americans' personal sense of distance, which is comfortable at about two feet. Getting any closer would cause visible unease and be considered an affront, if not an assault, most likely resulting in an angry request that the offending party "get out of my face" and "stop breathing my air" before pushing and shoving begins. Yet while Americans enjoy having room to roam and a personal sacrosanct space, the vast majority live in urbanized areas.

The new millennium finds 19,450 incorporated places in the United States with a total population of nearly 180,000,000. Nine of those places are cities of more than 1,000,000 people, which are home to 23,300,000 people. New York City, the largest of them, with over 8,000,000 citizens, has 26,403 people per square mile. Sprawling Los Angeles, with 3,800,000 people, has a population density of 7,877 per square mile, but Chicago's 2,800,000 people are packed into the city at the rate of 12,633 per square mile. Houston's 2,000,000 citizens have 3,372 neighbors in every square mile, but Philadelphia's 1,500,000 citizens have 11,234. Phoenix (1,400,000), San Diego (1,300,000), San Antonio (1,210,000), and Dallas (1,200,000) round out the list of America's largest cities, all with population densities of more than 2,700 per square mile.[11]

Fourteen million Americans live in the 22 cities with populations between 500,000 and 1,000,000. More than 40,000,000 live in the 214 cities with populations of 100,000–500,000. Almost 28,000,000 live in the 397 cities with population between 50,000 and 100,000. Small-town America, however, is very much alive. Nearly 52,000,000 Americans live in the 18,143 cities and towns with populations of less than 25,000. Of those cities and towns, 16,683 have populations under 10,000 and are home to about 10 percent of all Americans.

The cities alone do not tell the whole story of where and how most Americans live. An entirely different kind of automobile-enabled culture has

developed in the suburban areas that surround America's great cities. When the suburban and other areas that are dependent largely on core cities are considered as metropolitan areas, a clearer picture emerges. The metropolitan area of New York City, which includes parts of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, swells to 18,600,000 people, more than twice the number in the city itself. The Los Angeles metropolitan area, with 12,800,000 people, is more than three times the population of the city alone. Chicago's metropolitan area has 9,300,000 inhabitants, Philadelphia's has 5,800,000, and Dallas's has 5,600,000. These are America's largest five metropolitan areas, topping the list of 50 metropolitan areas with populations of more than 1,000,000.

Today, 79 percent of Americans live in urbanized areas—more than half of them in urbanized areas of over 1,000,000. The urban populations of California, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Jersey, and Rhode Island exceed 90 percent. Only about 2 percent of Americans live on farms.

So who are these Americans? America is now more racially and ethnically diverse than at any time in its history. Nearly 2 percent of the population claims the heritage of two or more races. Of those claiming a single race, whites still comprise the majority at over 75 percent. African Americans are a little over 12 percent of the population, American Indians and Alaska natives a bit under 1 percent, Asians 4.2 percent, and 2 percent claim some other race. Over 14 percent of the total population of any race claim Latino or Hispanic heritage.[12] Fifty percent of Hispanics are Mexican in origin; 36 percent live in California, with large contingents of Cubans in Florida, and others in Illinois, Texas, and New York. Of whites, most claim a British ancestry, but about 22 percent are of German descent, and 18 percent are of Irish descent.

The mix keeps changing. Around 1,000,000 legal immigrants are admitted each year, 70 percent of them relatives of U.S. citizens. In 2002, for example, of the 1,063,700 admitted immigrants, 174,200 came from Europe; 342,100 from Asia; 60,300 from Africa; 404,400 from North America, of whom 219,400 were Mexican; and 74,500 from South America. The number one destination for Mexican, Indian, Chinese, Filipino, and Vietnamese immigrants was California. Most Cubans went to Florida. New immigrants have tended to cluster in the large cities—Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Chicago, and Houston, for example—where others of the same heritage are already ensconced. However, cities such as Las Vegas, Atlanta, Salt Lake City, and Minneapolis have growing Hispanic populations. Asian populations are growing in Denver, Seattle, Boston, Detroit, and Miami. In addition to this legal immigration, estimates are that there are 7,000,000 unauthorized immigrants living in the United States: 4,808,000 from Mexico, with sizable numbers also from El Salvador

(189,000), Guatemala (144,000), Colombia (141,000), and Honduras (138,000). Of these 7,000,000 unauthorized immigrants, 2,209,000 were in California; 1,041,000 were in Texas; and 489,000 were in New York.

About 12 percent of the people in the United States were born elsewhere. Not surprisingly, 49,600,000 people, 18.7 percent of the U.S. population five years old and older, speak a language other than English at home. While some native-born Americans find this situation alarming, corporate America has welcomed these new consumers, especially those who speak Spanish, now America's second language. Spanish can be heard frequently in Los Angeles, San Antonio, and Miami, but all over America, packaging has suddenly appeared in Spanish and English, voting ballots may be obtained in Spanish, and bilingual signs have sprung up in retail stores, even in suburbia.

It is not just a platitude that America is a land of immigrants. It always has been and continues to be a destination for refugees and those seeking a better life. The real story about America is not its growing and changing population, but its ability to assimilate new immigrants into the American dream. To be sure, the process is seldom quick and sometimes difficult. Somehow though, the once undesirable neighborhoods of America's biggest and oldest cities segregating Italians, Irish, Jews, African Americans, Chinese, Puerto Ricans, and Poles became centers for the pursuit of happiness American style.

America's public education system, designed at the outset to teach citizenship as well as reading, writing, and arithmetic, is perhaps one of the unheralded causes of this transformation. As America expanded westward, land was set aside for schools, grade school through college. Today, the United States is a highly educated nation: 186,500,000 Americans (83.9%) who are at least 25 years old are high school graduates, and 27 percent have bachelor's degrees or further higher education.

Americans like to think they live in a classless society. No one is better than anyone else—everybody puts his pants on one leg at a time. Americans do not bow, curtsey, or nod their heads when they meet friends or strangers. With a firm grip and a handshake, Americans look into the eyes of the people they meet and immediately begin a new relationship on an equal, first-name basis. Yet the self-confidence and independence this behavior connotes is also the power behind the innovation and inventiveness that Americans cherish, and entrepreneurial risk taking can lead to incredible wealth. Bill Gates of Microsoft, Michael Dell of Dell Computer, and Sergei Brin of Google are to the computer age what Andrew Carnegie, J. P. Morgan, and John D. Rockefeller were to the industrial age. There are about 70 personal computers for every 100 Americans.

Sometimes politicians running for office can find just the right slogan that resonates with a fundamental belief nearly everyone holds closely. Bill

Clinton promised good things to those who work hard and play by the rules, much like a preacher promising heaven to those who pray and keep the 10 Commandments. Most Americans believe that hard work, whether backbreaking physical labor or long hours at the office (some 45,000,000 people list their occupation as managers or professionals, the largest single occupational category), is the path to the American dream. It is understood that salaried employees who work only 40 hours a week will not move up in the organization. Doing the minimum shows no initiative. The good things hard work is expected to bring are financial independence, which is tantamount to personal independence, new homes, new cars, nice vacations, and a lifestyle of choice. Americans seem to enjoy showing off the bounty of their success. A big house, a big car, season tickets to football games—the things money can buy—tell everyone "I made it." It is as if there were an imaginary ladder of success Americans try to climb, and near the top rung, money talks.

Clinton cleverly juxtaposed the notion of work and play. Americans work hard and play hard, too, as we shall see, but what absolutely galls most Americans is anyone who tries to get ahead by cheating. Playing by the rules at work, at play, and in life is a basic expectation. What the rules are is not particularly important, and they are always subject to change. The idea that someone who was undeserving would get something for nothing is, however, almost too much to bear. This was viewed as the problem with the welfare system; people who could have worked were getting checks for not working—not playing by the rules. On the other hand, Americans pour out their hearts and willingly open their wallets for people who cannot help themselves or are victims of disasters. American generosity is legendary. Millions of dollars from individual Americans have gone to survivors of tsunamis, earthquakes, and terrorist attacks. Likewise, millions of Americans volunteer in various social and religious organizations to help the less fortunate.

You do not have to be rich to participate in the American dream. Readily available credit allows dreams to come true. Americans are carrying $9,709,000,000 in personal debt. It starts for many with college. The median educational loan for graduates is $16,500. The average amount financed for a new car is more than $24,000. The average household has credit and car loan debt of $18,700. Then there is the mortgage on the house. Americans carry more than $7 trillion in mortgage debt. Payment of debt accounts for 13.6 percent of Americans' after tax income, but only about 5 percent fail to keep up with their payments. Easy credit is an invitation to a life of hard work.

Recent surveys have shown that the vast majority of Americans view themselves as hard working, inventive, and honest. A majority of Americans also view their compatriots as greedy and not religious enough. One in five Americans, on the other hand, thinks America is too religious. Nearly half view

the country as violent, and over one-third view their fellow Americans as immoral and rude.[13] Hard work, inventiveness, and honesty are core American values that have persisted over time and are elemental to the formation of American character. These values are also expectations that Americans have for each other and certainly for its newest citizens.

It is not surprising that Americans are often viewed by others as too big for their britches. Americans' expectation for things being done in the American way, whatever that may be, appears as arrogance. In fact, the American penchant for efficient use of time—gulping down fast food, always on time for appointments—seems to have created a robotic society tuned to the clock as if in the last two minutes of a football game. When expectations are not met—if a traffic jam causes one to be late, for example—Americans feel a certain stress that may manifest itself as haughtiness. Yet as self-reliant problem solvers, they also believe that whatever caused the system to go awry can be fixed.

We will see in more detail later that Americans are generally a religious people, and America is home to perhaps 150 or more religious groups. There is a diversity of religious values and beliefs among Americans, but that religion plays a role in building American character is indisputable. Neither can it be disputed that violence is part of everyday American life, which seems to contradict the religious and civic values that hold the nation together. In 2003, for example, 1,381,000 violent crimes were known to police across America: 17,000 murders; 93,000 forcible rapes; 413,000 robberies; and 858,000 aggravated assaults. Over 10,400,000 property crimes were also reported. Ninety percent of the violent crimes occurred in large metropolitan areas. Handguns were the weapons used in more than half of the murders.

The official language of the United States of America is . . . well, there is no official language. That is probably a good thing because if Congress declared an official language, most Americans would refuse to speak it. Government and government motives have always been viewed with a certain suspicion, and any attempt to regulate language would probably be considered a violation of cherished individual rights. Thus, in a sense, there are some 300,000,000 dialects of American English in the United States. The fact is, however, that language may be a clue to what region a person grew up in or lives in. It also may hint at social class, age, education, and ethnicity. When Americans hear expressions like these, they can usually size up the speaker's background:

Was you goin' to town?

Like eeeeyoooo, that's gross!

They are vacationing in Warshington!

The delegation arrived in Cuber to see Castro!

How ya'll doin'?
Leave the paper on the stoop!
He's all hat and no cattle!
Are you going to the shore this weekend?
Do she have the book?
So, yous wanna go get a cheesesteak?
That maht could work!
You betcha!
Let's get a grinder for lunch!
I've got to red up the house already!
I asked for a soda, not a Coke!
Dame un bipeo later!
The machine's all tore up!
Go out to the bahn and check on the horses.
Dose doyty boyds are nesting right under my window!

Broadly considered, there are only two general dialects in the United States, northern and southern, each with numerous variations. The general northern dialect is spoken in all areas of the country outside the Old South of the Confederacy. Greatly influenced by the language of New England, further dialects of the general northern dialect developed with westward expansion. The Great Lakes dialect is spoken from Syracuse to Milwaukee, and its nasal *A*s can be heard in Chicago, Detroit, Buffalo, and Cleveland. The North Midland dialect, with full *R*s pronounced, stretches from south Jersey and northern Maryland across most of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, and eastern Oklahoma. The western dialect, also with general northern dialect roots, is relatively new in linguistic history terms and is mixed with regional sounds. Subsets or subdialects of the western dialect include the Southwest, the Pacific Northwest, central and northern California, and the interior western states. The general southern dialect has only two divisions. The southern dialect is spoken in the southeast from Maryland south to Florida and in the lowlands of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and east Texas. The South Midland dialect is spoken in the highlands and inland from southern Ohio through the Texas panhandle.[14]

Such broad classifications hardly do justice to the variety of the American language. Ethnic groups bring their own flare to the language—African Americans, Cajuns, Chicanos—and America's major cities, notably Boston, New York, and San Francisco, have developed a distinctive patois. Teenagers of all ethnic groups continue to make and remake their own languages. Yet

even in the face of this complexity and diversity, it has been argued that Americans' mobility and the constant, flat sounds of so-called standard American over radio and television will wipe out regional linguistic variations. Linguistic boundaries may change and blur, but the fact remains that people in Boston do not sound anything like people in New Orleans. What is really important to the fabric of American life, however, is that Bostonians and New Orleanians, Texans and Michiganders, can all understand each other. Any Englishman will tell you that there is an American accent.

The Past

The Natives and European Exploration

The earliest immigrants to America began arriving perhaps 30,000 years ago from Asia over a land bridge that connected Siberia with the North American continent. Archaeological evidence also suggests that indigenous populations in South America migrated northward. By the time Europeans discovered this New World at the end of the fifteenth century, there were anywhere from 1,500,000 to 6,000,000 natives in the continental United States and probably around 75,000,000 in the entire New World. Migrations to North America and within the continent continued for thousands of years. These immigrants spread from the west to the Atlantic Ocean. There was a substantial migration from established Mexican cultures northward into the Mississippi Valley and beyond through which the cultivation of maize spread. They created empires, trading routes, and a great number of distinct languages and cultures. They were artists, artisans, farmers, hunters, and traders who raised families in religious traditions with social values.

The complexity of the native cultures was lost on early European explorers. Indeed, we still live with Christopher Columbus's confusion that he had found India and therefore named these American natives Indians. These explorers were confronted by people who spoke languages unintelligible to them, who were naked, who were suspicious of their motives, and who approached them carefully. One voyager chronicled his astonishment that the women could swim and run faster than the men. Women athletes had been discovered. The explorers referred to themselves as the Christians and to the naked natives as savages.

These European attitudes informed what quickly became a European race to claim whatever riches the New World had to offer. To the minds of the civilized Christian Europeans, the natives owned no claims to the land. Christopher Columbus, sailing for Spain, discovered America in 1492, but never saw what would become the United States. John Cabot made claims for England to North America in 1497. The Spanish, however, seemed to have

a leg up on the British. Juan Ponce de Léon explored the coasts of Florida in 1513. After Cortés conquered the Aztecs and Mexico in 1522, Spanish explorers went north from there and from Cuba. Cabeza de Vaca explored the Gulf Coast from Florida to the southwest from 1528 to 1536. Hernando de Soto explored what would be 14 states from Florida to Michigan and west between 1539 and 1542. Francisco Vásquez de Coronado explored the southwest from 1539 to 1541 and discovered the Grand Canyon. Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo explored California in 1542. In 1565, the Spanish established the first city in the future United States, St. Augustine, Florida. Sirs Walter Raleigh and Humphrey Gilbert did not establish Roanoke Island, the lost colony, until 1585. Jamestown, established in 1607, was England's first successful settlement.

France, the Netherlands, and Sweden were also in the race. France commissioned Giovanni de Verrazanno to seek the fabled Northwest Passage in 1524, but it was Jacques Cartier who established French North American claims in 1535. The Spanish eliminated French settlements in Florida. In 1673, Louis Joliet and Jacques Marquette explored the upper Mississippi River, and in 1698, Sieur de LaSalle explored Lake Michigan and the upper Mississippi River. Sieur de Bienville established New Orleans in 1698, and a year later, Sieur d'Iberville was the first European to enter the Mississippi River from the Gulf of Mexico.

Henry Hudson made a claim for the Netherlands for all the land from the river named for him to Albany in 1609, but about 30 years later, the Dutch government issued a patent to the New Netherlands Company for the area between Virginia and New France. Sweden established a colony near Wilmington, Delaware, in 1638, but the Dutch took it from them in 1655. Nine years later, however, the Dutch surrendered New Amsterdam to the English owing to a bit of English brinksmanship. New Amsterdam became the English colony of New York, and the Dutch were out of business in North America.

By 1700, England's colonies, hugging the Atlantic coast, were surrounded by French territory to the north and west and Spanish territory to the south. New France was an immense land that extended from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia all the way to Lake Superior, southward down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico, with eastern borders along the English colonies. Wars would make dramatic changes. England took Nova Scotia and Newfoundland from France in the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht, which ended Queen Anne's War. England found itself pitted against France and Spain in the French and Indian War that lasted from 1756 until 1763 and thus is also known also as the Seven Years' War. With England's victory, in part thanks to its American colonists, the so-called First Treaty of Paris in 1763 gave England all of New France as well as the Floridas, which had been owned by Spain.

Even with England's tremendous victory, the war did not settle the so-called Indian question. Settlers were moving into Indian territory rapidly and ceaselessly. King George III tried to stop them by drawing the 1763 Line of Demarcation along the backbone of the Appalachian Mountains, a line which settlers were forbidden to cross. It did not work. The great chief Pontiac rebelled against the constant encroachment of the Europeans onto native lands from 1763 until he was defeated in 1766.

The Birth and Development of the United States

When the next Treaty of Paris was signed on September 3, 1783, ending the American Revolutionary War, the United States' borders suddenly stretched to the Mississippi River. England was out of the South as Spain had allied with France and the colonies and repossessed the Floridas. When the Constitution replaced the Articles of Confederation, which had not been approved until 1781, George Washington became the nation's first president in 1789. He became the leader of 3,893,874 Americans, of whom 694,207 were slaves, according to the 1790 census. The new nation set out on its own, no longer under British control, but with the legacies of having been British citizens: a Protestant Christian religion, common law, democratic institutions, statements of rights, the English language, and English manners and customs.

Already in 1780, Congress envisioned new states in the new territory. States began ceding their land claims to the federal government. In 1785, Congress provided funds for surveys to lay out townships in 36 numbered subdivisions of one mile each. Lot 16 was reserved for public schools. No land was to be sold for less than $1 an acre. The 1787 Northwest Ordinance set into operation the development of the states of Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin. Selling land would help the bankrupt federal government. In 1796, Congress approved the selling of one square mile (640 acres) for $2 an acre. In 1800, you could buy 320-acre plots for $2 an acre on four years of credit. In 1804, 160-acre plots went for $1.64 an acre. In 1820, 80-acre plots went for $1.25 an acre.

President Thomas Jefferson just wanted to buy New Orleans. Control of that port city was vital to American commerce. Much to his surprise, Napoleon was willing to sell not only the port city, but also all of Louisiana Territory, which Spain had quietly ceded to France. For a purchase price of $15,000,000, the United States got 800,000 square miles of land, which would include the future states of Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, and parts of seven other western states.

The United States continued to tidy up its borders. In 1818, the United States and England agreed to a 49 degree latitude northern border and joint

occupation of Oregon country. In 1819, the United States paid Spain $5,000,000 for Florida and established a southwest boundary that cut Spain off at the 42nd parallel, thus with no claim to the Pacific Northwest. In return, the United States gave up the Texas Gulf Coast. Mexico became America's new neighbor in 1821 when it became independent of Spain. The Republic of Texas, independent of Mexico since 1836, was annexed in 1845 at its behest. In 1846, the United States and Britain signed an agreement to settle the Oregon country border along the 49th parallel, which permitted establishment of the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and parts of Montana and Wyoming.

The treaty settling the Mexican War in 1848 gave Texas its Rio Grande border as well as south and west Texas. The United States received California, Arizona, the Oklahoma panhandle, and the southwestern corners of Kansas and Wyoming. In just 60 years since Washington took office, the United States stretched from sea to sea. Yet as the United States reached the long-sought dream of what some thought to be its manifest destiny, the year 1848 also marked the stirrings of a revolution in America.

Women had steadily been making headway along the avenues long closed to them. They were gradually getting legal control of their own property in marriage, and teaching grade school had become an acceptable calling. Education beyond elementary school was beginning to open up—Mount Holyoke College became the nation's first women's college in 1837. Women were beginning to emerge as leaders in education, social issues, literature, and journalism, but they lacked civil rights equal to men's as well as the equal opportunities men enjoyed. In 1848, delegates to the first Women's Rights Convention assembled in Seneca Falls, New York. In the convention's "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions," the delegates declared that men had established "absolute tyranny" over women, and the facts proved it. Men did not permit women to vote, and women were forced to live under laws in which they had no voice. Married women were "civilly dead," and men had usurped women's rights to their own property and wages. Men had taken the good jobs for themselves and left to women only poorly paying positions. Men had blocked women from educational opportunities and created a different "code of morals" for women. Perhaps most appallingly, men had tried to destroy women's confidence in themselves, lessen their self-respect, and make them "willing to lead a dependent and abject life."[15] This was the first volley in a continuing struggle for civil rights, which, like the African American struggle for basic rights, would have a long and continuing history. White men were not interested in letting people unlike themselves into their private club.

The westward expansion of the United States took place within the framework of sectional controversy, which was explicitly played out in the U.S.

Senate. Southern senators had long tired of what they saw as the attempts of northern senators to usurp power by limiting the expansion of slavery and the southern way of life. The southerners felt left behind politically. Northern senators, many of whom believed the existence of slavery in the United States was in itself an abomination, also were disgusted by the fact that southern political power in the House of Representatives was propped up by the constitutional provision that slaves be counted as three-fifths of a person in the decennial census. (Native Indians were not counted at all because as members of separate nations, they were not citizens. Women were counted on both sides, but not allowed to vote or even hold property in most states.) This meant that southerners could claim greater representation based on a population with no right to vote. Thus, as the South stagnated in a largely rural, plantation economy with little urbanization and poor transportation, the North was bursting with new populations and growing industry, and excellent transportation routes had developed to market it products.

The great Senate compromise that allowed new states to enter the Union traded slave states for free states once the old Northwest Territory entered the Union with slavery banned. The Civil War, fought from 1861 to 1865, ended that compromise and, more importantly, gave former slaves freedom and voting rights, at least constitutionally. Reality was quite a different thing. Black slaves from the West Indies and Africa were some of the very first Americans, having been imported in large numbers in the early 1700s and present early in the preceding century. The importation of slaves into the country ceased in 1808 (this was another compromise that helped to pass the Constitution), and thus the African American population became indigenous. Yet African Americans' efforts to enjoy the fullness of American citizenship remain a continuous struggle. America and Americans cannot be fully understood without considering what is popularly called the *race question.* While no American alive today can imagine that people of any color were once bought and sold as property in this nation conceived in liberty, neither has any American been untouched by this legacy.

The Civil War was horrific. The 1860 census counted 31,400,000 Americans. Over 3,800,000 troops (2,800,000 Union soldiers; 1,000,000 Confederate soldiers) had served in the war by its end, and 558,052 were killed (359,528 Union soldiers; 198,524 Confederate soldiers). More than 412,000 soldiers were wounded and survived.[16] Families were decimated and divided. Much of the South was left in ruins. The conclusion of the war left two major questions: what would become of the suddenly freed former slaves, and how would the South be repatriated into the Union? Congress, for its part, outlawed slavery and created the Freedmen's Bureau in 1865. The bureau was to provide education, food, clothing, and advice to the freed slaves.

It was also to distribute confiscated land, but this proved mostly a futile effort. Widely hated in the South, the bureau did, however, provide the only educational opportunities available to African Americans at that time in the South. The bureau was also helping African Americans negotiate contracts for their labor, an entirely new concept for former slaves, and the bureau also began recording the legal marriages of the former slaves, also something new. By 1872, however, the Freedmen's Bureau was gone.

President Andrew Johnson, like his predecessor Abraham Lincoln, wanted to bring the Southern states back into the Union quickly, requiring only that 10 percent of a seceded state's voters take an oath of allegiance to the Union and accept the prohibition of slavery before a new state government be created, which would then be recognized as legitimate. Johnson acted quickly to use Lincoln's formula to bring in some states and then issued his own somewhat more difficult 10 percent solution. The recognized states then began to pass the infamous Black Codes, which placed African Americans into second-class status by law, without the institution of slavery yet still without the right to vote. In reaction, Congress passed the 14th Amendment to the Constitution in 1866, which was adopted in 1868. This constitutional amendment declared "all persons born or naturalized in the United States," notably former slaves, to be citizens. Furthermore, it provided that no state "shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States." The amendment also forbad states to "deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws," yet it stopped short of explicitly giving African Americans the right to vote. That would not come until 1870 with adoption of the 15th Amendment to the Constitution.

The political squabbles among Congress, the president, and recalcitrant state governments led, in 1867, to Congress's placing the old Confederate states, with the exception of Tennessee, under military rule in five districts. Under military jurisdiction, all of the 10 formerly rebellious states were readmitted to the Union by 1870, and new governments under new and better constitutions were in place three to four years after readmission. It was not until 1877, however, that all the military districts in the old Confederacy were closed. Thus ended the Reconstruction of the South. The federal government gave up any effort to reform southern racial thinking or enforce the laws it had passed to assure African American equality. Left to their own devices, southern states developed Jim Crow laws that entrenched racial segregation, disenfranchised African Americans, and encouraged racial injustice.

Following the Civil War, the United States continued to expand its territory. The 1867 purchase of Alaska from Russia for $7,200,000 increased U.S. territory by 20 percent. Pro-American revolutionaries tossed out the

royals in Hawaii in 1893, and it was annexed to the United States in 1898. Thus, at the dawn of the twentieth century, the American states as we know them today were secured. Hawaii and Alaska both officially entered the Union in 1959. The country was populated and settled. Homesteading, except in Alaska, ended in 1935.

The U.S. Constitution was constantly reinforced as new territories petitioned for statehood. State constitutions had to be written and approved by Congress, and nothing in a state constitution could be antithetical to or contradict the federal document. The voters in a prospective state had to vote in favor of the state constitution and vote in favor of joining the Union. The state constitutions, therefore, are often reiterations of the U.S. Constitution, setting up three equal branches—executive, legislative, and judicial—as checks and balances and adopting the liberties expressed in the Constitution's first 10 amendments, the Bill of Rights. Even at a time when *We the People* meant white men, aristocratic or common, the values of American constitutional democracy spread across the nation, eventually creating 50 united, sovereign republics. Thus, for Americans, the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Bill of Rights are revered living documents. They together form the foundation for understanding how Americans think of themselves and live in a nation of laws.

American Indian Policy

The 1783 Treaty of Paris that gave the land east of the Mississippi River to the new United States of America also by default gave the United States all of the land in that area belonging to the native Indians. They, too, were living in a new country, but with no voice.

Indian tribes were treated from the start as separate nations, and thus the president was responsible for dealing with them as part of his foreign policy. The early presidents enjoyed their status as so-called great white fathers. President Washington laid out what the policy objectives would be: peace, Indian happiness, and their attachment to the United States. President James Monroe acknowledged in 1821 that the federal Indian policy had failed. He noted that Indians had been treated "as independent nations, without their having any substantial pretensions to that rank."[17] A War Department report found that there were 129,266 Indians then in the states and territories of the United States and that their land claims totaled 77,402,318 acres.[18] Something had to be done.

Indians would be given the Great Plains, thought worthless to European whites, and Congress gave the War Department power to negotiate treaties, to be ratified by the Senate, and eastern Indians were to be moved into a place where they could live peaceably with western Indians. Between

1825 and 1841, numerous treaties were made and ratified, and the Indian frontier formed around the western borders of Louisiana, Arkansas, and Missouri, east almost to Illinois, and including what would be most of Iowa and southern Wisconsin. With the passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1830, getting the natives out of white settlements east of the Mississippi River became official U.S. policy. Yet no matter the nicety of the treaties, many natives had no desire to move. In the winter of 1838, the army forcibly removed 15,000 Cherokee from their homeland in northwestern Georgia to Indian Territory over the Trail of Tears at the cost of some 4,000 Cherokee lives. Seminoles, who waged a long, ill-fated war; Chickasaw; Creek; and Choctaw took different trails to the same end. In 1823, the Supreme Court declared that Indians had occupancy rights but no ownership rights to their land.

By 1840, the Indians were secured in lands away from settlers, but only 10 years later, they were being squeezed by both westward and eastward expansion, united by railroads. There were around 83,000 northern Plains Indians—Santee, Yankton, Oglala, Teton, Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, Arapahoe, and Crow. There were about 65,000 southern Cheyenne, Arapahoe, Navajo, and Apache living in Colorado, the Southwest, and the central Rockies. The Five Civilized Tribes removed earlier from the Southeast—Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creeks, and Seminoles—shared the southern plains with the Comanche, Kiowa, and Pawnee tribes. These numbered 75,000. After the Civil War, Congress acted to restrict Indian lands even more. As the Indians revolted, the government sought to limit them to an Indian Territory in the future state of Oklahoma.

In 1871, Congress took nationhood status away from the tribes. Oklahoma was organized in 1890 as two entities: Oklahoma Territory and Indian Territory. By this time, the millions of buffalo that had roamed the West and had provided the basis for Plains natives' lives even after the Civil War were reduced to only about 1,000 by wholesale slaughter. In 1898, tribal courts were abolished. On March 3, 1901, the Indians in Oklahoma became U.S. citizens by act of Congress. Oklahoma became the 46th state in 1907. The United States pursued a number of Indian policies, including the 1887 Dawes Act, which allowed allotment of reservation land to Indians to turn them into something like white farmers. On June 2, 1924, all native-born Indians became U.S. citizens thanks to their war service. In 1934, the Wheeler-Howard Act (Indian Reorganization Act) reversed Indian policy and negated the Dawes Act, while promoting Indian customs, and gave tribes the right to organize themselves with constitutions and bylaws into tribal councils. It was extended to Alaska and Oklahoma Indians in 1936. By 1947, 195 tribes or groups were operating under the act.

In 2001, there were slightly over 4,000,000 American Indians and Alaska natives, including over 180,000 Latin American Indians, in the United States. In rounded numbers, the largest tribes are the Cherokee, with 730,000; Navajo, with 298,000; Choctaw, with 158,000; Sioux, with 153,000; Chippewa, with 150,000; Apache, with 97,000; Blackfeet, with 86,000; Iroquois, with 81,000; Pueblo, with 74,000; Creek, with 71,000; Eskimo, with 55,000; and Lumbee, with 58,000. All other tribes have populations of less than 50,000, including the Cheyenne, Chickasaw, Colville, Comanche, Cree, Crow, Delaware, Kiowa, Menominee, Osage, Ottawa, Paiute, Pima, Potawatomi, and so on.[19] By far the largest and the only reservation/trust land with over 100,000 Indian inhabitants is the Navajo Nation Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah, which has about 174,000 Indian inhabitants.

Immigration and Migration

We have seen that the United States developed primarily out of English culture and tradition. In 1780, 75 percent of Americans were of English or Irish descent. Germans and Dutch were a distant second and third of the population. The nineteenth century, however, brought streams of immigrants to America. The potato famine in Ireland during the 1840s brought Irish to the United States at a peak rate of over 100,000 per year. German immigrants swelled the population after the failure of the liberal 1848 Revolution. German immigration was also encouraged by the Union government, in need of soldiers during the Civil War. Promises of free land fueled the numbers willing to fight for the North. About 1,000,000 Asians—Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, Indians—came to the United States in the last half of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, but their numbers were dwarfed by the migration of Europeans. Jews began migrating to the United States from eastern Europe during the last quarter of the nineteenth century to escape religious persecution. Continued persecution in western Europe, most notably in Hitler's Germany, brought more Jews to the United States.[20]

At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were 76,212,168 Americans. Of these, 10,431,276 were born elsewhere. Imagine building a national identity out of 1,167,623 people from Great Britain; 1,615,459 Irish, who did not like the British; 1,134,744 Scandinavians, Swedes being the largest group; 104,197 French and 2,663,418 Germans, who were usually at war with each other back home; 484,027 Italians; 145,714 Hungarians; 383,407 Poles; 423,726 Russians; 81,534 Chinese; 24,788 Japanese; 11,081 Cubans; and 103,393 Mexicans, with smatterings of people born in India, Portugal, Czechoslovakia, Turkey, Austria, Greece, Belgium, and even Luxembourg.[21]

Although the number of Asian immigrants was rather small, especially in comparison to the number of Europeans, U.S. policy beginning in 1924 excluded Asian immigration and encouraged maintenance of the same mix of people who had already come into the country. Chinese were not allowed into the United States for almost 20 years. Country immigration quotas were abandoned in 1965 for hemispheric quotas, which in turn were abandoned in 1978 for a total worldwide ceiling. Those who apply for immigration visas first now have the best chance of getting them. Preference is given to immigrants with family already in America and with job skills needed in the United States. Political refugees may have special status. More than 1,000,000 immigrants received permanent residential status under various refugee acts between 1991 and 2000. Of these, 426,555 came from Europe, primarily the Ukraine and the Soviet Union/Russia. Another 351,347 came from Asia, more than half of them from Vietnam, and following in order thereafter from Laos, Iran, Thailand, and Iraq. North Americans numbering 185,333, all but about 40,000 Cubans, came into the United States with refugee status. Over 51,000 Africans came in, most of them to escape the human disasters in Ethiopia and Somalia. They were joined by 5,857 South Americans.

As part of the State Department's Diversity Visa Program, 50,000 visas are issued annually to people from countries underrepresented in the immigrant pool. While Russians, Indians, Canadians, Mexicans, Filipinos, Poles, Pakistanis, and several other nationalities are excluded from this program, America is now receiving small numbers of immigrants from Africa, South America, and elsewhere who are not otherwise subject to refugee acts.

Between 1892 and 1954, more than 12,000,000 immigrants entered the United States just from Ellis Island.[22] Yet while immigrants from abroad poured into America, two other incredible migrations were taking place inside the country.

In the space of 80 years, from 1890 to 1970, African Americans forsook the rural South for northern and western cities. More than 6,000,000 people sought freedom from overt racism and a better life in industrial cities that provided jobs. This grassroots migration fundamentally transformed African American culture into an urban phenomenon. Not until the 1970s did African Americans begin to return to the South as racial barriers diminished, and the general population movement was away from northern cities into a quickly developing Sunbelt. The ongoing Mexican migration into the United States is likewise having transforming effects on Mexican-American culture.

Whites, too, were migrating. Migration out of the southwestern agricultural plains began in earnest by 1910 and continued through the 1970s. While the initial migration from this area has been attributed to increased farming efficiencies and a general westward expansion of the population seeking new

opportunities, especially in California, a combination of events following the 1929 stock market crash caused another burst of migration to California and elsewhere. As the American economy languished in depression, farm prices plummeted. On top of that, rain virtually ceased in the 1930s, giving rise to the dust storms that gave the area of north Texas, the Oklahoma panhandle, western Kansas, southeast Nebraska, southeastern Colorado, and extreme eastern New Mexico the appellation the Dust Bowl. Some 300,000–400,000 Okies made their way to California in a seemingly endless caravan that was documented in literature, film, and photographs. Not all the migrants were impoverished and carrying all their belongings on a rickety old farm truck, but these were the pictures Americans saw, pictures that violated their beliefs in an abundant land and the promise of prosperity.[23]

The Twentieth Century

At the dawn of the twentieth century, the United States was in full possession of its mainland territory and the outlying territories that would eventually add two new states, but the business of American democracy remained quite unfinished. In fact, it was just getting started. The federal government had granted generous right of ways and land to promote the building of railroads that would unite East with West. The first line was completed in 1869 when the rails of the Union Pacific coming from Omaha, Nebraska, met the rails of the Central Pacific coming from San Francisco in Ogden, Utah. In 1883, the Northern Pacific line from Duluth, Minnesota, to Seattle was completed. The Southern Pacific route from New Orleans to Los Angeles was finished in 1884, and the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe line from Atchison, Kansas, to Los Angeles and San Francisco was completed in the same year.

With these railroads and others, American manufacturers and industrialists had a truly national market. Vast fortunes were made in rails, oil, steel, banking, and finance. Robber barons to some and philanthropists to others, these multimillionaires made their money in a laissez-faire, capitalist economy with few constraints. Government regulations were few, there were no income taxes (an income tax was inaugurated in 1861 by the Union to help pay for the Civil War, but it was abandoned in 1872), and there was not even a national bank to regulate money supply or modulate economic booms and busts. (Andrew Jackson, who considered all banks to be evil, vetoed a bill to recharter the Second Bank of the United States in 1832.) Income taxes were reinstated in 1913, the same year the Federal Reserve banking system was created. Wage earners, with meager benefits, were expected to save their money for the bad times. Unemployment insurance and assured old age pensions became a reality only in 1935 with the passage of the Social Security Act. After the failure of Reconstruction, the American laissez-faire system was not perceived to have

responsibility for social change or social welfare. Franklin Roosevelt and his New Deal would change all that in the depths of the Depression.

The road to the United States becoming an industrial powerhouse that could also feed the world was not a straight line up the chart. To be sure, after the Civil War and into the twentieth century, the United States was growing in leaps and bounds in virtually any imaginable category, from territory and population through industrial and agricultural production. However, the unregulated American economy was given to excessive speculation and violent downturns. Called *panics,* these trying economic downturns occurred in 1819, 1837, 1857, 1873, 1884, 1893, and 1907. The Panic of 1819 was caused by easy credit for buying and speculating on land. When things got out of control, the Bank of the United States, which had once helped to fund the speculation with easy money, began calling in some loans, and the bubble finally burst, leaving the country in a depression for about four years. When President Jackson decided to end another burst of land speculation in 1836 by requiring that federal lands had to be paid for in specie (coin), rather than in worthless paper, he precipitated the Panic of 1837 that lasted a good seven years and resulted in a dramatic deflation of commodity prices and unemployment throughout America's cities. The relatively short Panic of 1857, which was preceded by another speculative boom in land and railroad stocks, again saw prices for stocks, bonds, and commodities drop. The Panic of 1873, which lasted until 1879, was caused by banks making extremely liberal loans to rapidly expanding American businesses, particularly railroads. Banks, many of which lent their reserves and even borrowed funds as well as their assets, failed, and thousands of businesses went bankrupt. The short Panic of 1884 was again caused largely by poor banking practices.

The Panic of 1893 illustrated how tenuous the U.S. financial system really was. The stock market crashed early in the year, and foreigners sold out their positions, which caused an increased demand for gold, on which the U.S. currency was based de facto. (The gold standard became official in 1900.) As a result, the U.S. Treasury gold reserves were depleted to as little as $55,000,000. The proper reserve was understood to be $100,000,000. Financier, banker, and industrialist J. P. Morgan rescued the U.S. Treasury by purchasing a privately placed bond issue, the proceeds from which the Treasury would use to increase gold reserves to stabilize the dollar. Morgan later made a tidy profit on the bonds when they were sold publicly. This severe panic lasted three years and ended the future of hundreds of banks and thousands of businesses. The short Panic of 1907 was more of the same.

It had become abundantly clear that the American dream could sometimes be a nightmare. Entire fortunes could be wiped out in an instant. For those without fortunes, there was no protection at all. Workers turned to labor

unions, which began to be formed after the Civil War, in the search for higher wages, better benefits, and better working conditions. Labor management–owner relations would be particularly difficult through the industrialization of the country. The great titans of American industry, the fittest who had survived, did not expect to have demands placed on them by underlings.

America had long been content to exert its hegemony only in North and South America, calling up the tradition of the 1823 Monroe Doctrine, which was a warning to European powers that the era of colonization and intervention in the Americas was over. Indeed, Americans had enjoyed a long period of isolation from the world. They were suspicious of old Europe and its endless wars. Americans were likewise suspicious of a large standing army and, in fact, did not possess one. America did, however, have a navy. The Spanish-American War showed it off to the world. Suddenly, the United States found itself an imperial power, much to the disappointment of the large anti-imperialist contingent at home. Cuba, Puerto Rico, and eventually, the Philippines (for a $20,000,000 payment to Spain) came into American hands. President McKinley supported the 1899 treaty that gave the Philippines to the United States in the belief that Americans had a divine obligation to civilize and Christianize the Filipino people. When Teddy Roosevelt, a former secretary of the navy, became president after McKinley's assassination, he liberally utilized America's gunboats to enforce so-called democracy in the New World.

World War I marked America's transformation into a recognized world power. There can be no debate that sheer numbers of American soldiers turned the tide for the Allied forces, which, before the Americans arrived, were hunkered down in vicious trench warfare along battle lines that were not moving. Curiously, however, in spite of President Woodrow Wilson's Preparedness Campaign, the United States was quite unprepared to mount a major war effort. It was not until May 1917 that the Selective Service Act authorized a temporary increase in troops. More than 4,700,000 Americans finally served in the war. About 350,000 were African Americans, who found themselves mostly doing menial tasks in the segregated military.[24]

The American government itself, kept rather small during the age of hands-off capitalism, was not capable of directing the war effort alone. Military procurement practices were slow and even contradictory. Wilson formed the War Industries Board, made up of volunteer businessmen, labor leaders, and other notables, to manage the purchase, production, and distribution of materials for civilians and the military. While the military bridled at civilian involvement in its affairs and industrialists both feared doing business with the government (they correctly believed they would be stuck with overcapacity when the war ended) and found government regulation of their business to be socialistic, if not totally un-American, America's first attempt

of government-industry cooperation was a success. This lesson was put to good use during World War II.

The Roaring Twenties were ushered in by what proved to be the first of many so-called red scares in twentieth-century America, when the government began rounding up anarchists and communists after the war. There was never any evidence of a Bolshevik plot against America, but the godless Communists would continue to be a bugaboo that could be called out to scare the citizens of an otherwise secure country. This scare came and went quickly as the economy expanded and America set out on a new foot, but was very content to look inward. This new world power would not be part of the League of Nations. Women now had the right to vote. The work that women's rights advocates Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton had begun when they founded the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1869 paid off over the following years in getting women the vote in a number of states, but in 1920, their dream of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution finally came true.

As white flapper girls and college kids in raccoon coats sought to redefine the new era on their own terms, Harlem, New York, burst forth as the center of a new, urban African American culture. The Harlem Renaissance featured African American poetry, literature, and an intellectual life like never before seen. The sounds of jazz and the blues even brought whites to Harlem. Men in top hats and women in ermine and pearls would go to sing "Minnie the Moocher" with Cab Calloway, who was dressed to the nines. They went to hear Eubie Blake's music and Duke Ellington's elegant compositions. The Harlem Renaissance was an announcement that a new African American culture had arrived that was very much American. In fact, so American was it that white musicians and bandleaders liberally borrowed the African American music they heard to play for their white audiences.

The 1920s also marked the beginning of one of America's most failed experiments: Prohibition. In 1919, the 18th Amendment to the Constitution had been adopted. This amendment prohibited "the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation of thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof, for beverage purposes." The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), founded in 1874, and the Anti-Saloon League, founded in 1893, together were powerful forces in the movement to ban alcoholic beverages. The WCTU effectively operated through churches, and its members traversed the country asking children to "take the pledge" that they would never drink alcohol. They were influential in getting alcohol banned in some states and localities. So effective was the WCTU that the public often conflated the WCTU with the women's rights movement. This confusion

Women carrying placards reading "We want beer" protest during an anti-prohibition parade in New Jersey in the early 1930s. © AP Photo.

may actually have delayed passage of the bill granting women the right to vote. Women's voting rights had, in the end, proved less controversial than prohibiting alcohol. The Anti-Saloon League, founded by men, also worked through churches, but its goal was always antialcohol legislation. Until Prohibition ended in 1933 with the passage of the 21st Amendment, which repealed the 18th Amendment, Americans made home brew and bathtub gin and drank publicly at speakeasies, where illegal alcohol was readily available.

If nothing else, Prohibition left a colorful history of federal agents chasing Mafia bootleggers and gangsters in their automobiles with machine guns blazing. If fact, all Americans began chasing each other in their automobiles. A revolution had taken place. In 1895, only four automobiles were registered in the entire country. By 1920, there were over 8,000,000.[25] Henry Ford and his Model-T were primarily responsible for this revolution that would fundamentally change America. Ford's manufacturing techniques, which employed mass production assembly lines, actually brought the prices of automobiles down. In 1920, a brand-new black Model-T cost about $450. Americans took to them like ducks to water, leaving Ford with more than 40 percent of the automobile market and creating the demand for new and better roads.

By 1930, there were more than 26,500,000 cars registered in the United States, but America's carefree ride through the 1920s came to a screeching

halt on October 29, 1929. The stock market crash that day ended another speculative bubble in overpriced securities, and the economy began a vicious downward spiral. Soon, thousands of banks and businesses were under water. Unemployment, which stood at 3.2 percent in 1929, was almost 25 percent by 1933. Those lucky enough to keep a job found their wages decreased. Agriculture prices collapsed so severely that farmers began to revolt in frustration. The vaunted American consumer, whose income had steadily risen through the 1920s, suddenly could no longer consume, which further decreased demand and the need for production. Borrowers could not repay banks. The Federal Reserve could not handle a monetary crisis of this proportion. Charitable organizations did not have the resources to assist the new poor. Corporate profits dissipated. Once proud working Americans found themselves in breadlines.

Franklin Roosevelt was elected president in 1932. His can-do attitude and optimism bolstered the hopes of Americans for recovery, yet in 1940, the nation's economy was scarcely better than it had been in 1929. Unemployment was still over 14 percent. Roosevelt inflated the currency by abandoning the gold standard and created government agencies—derisively called *alphabet agencies*—designed to put Americans back to work. Between 1933 and 1935, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration provided over $3,000,000,000 for relief funds and temporary jobs. True to the American belief that work brings rewards, very little money was spent on direct welfare expenditures, except to feed people. Even in the Depression, getting something for nothing was anathema to Americans—jobs were the answer, and Roosevelt said as much. In 1935, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) took over relief efforts. Lasting until 1943, the WPA put people to work on public improvement, educational, and artistic projects. At one time, more than 3,000,000 Americans were working for the WPA. The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Youth Administration were designed to provide work for young people. Farmers got help with commodity prices, and the Rural Electrification Administration brought electricity to rural America. The Tennessee Valley Authority brought electricity to downtrodden Appalachia. The Securities and Exchange Commission was to clarify investment trading regulations and corporate finances for investors. The National Labor Relations Board, created by the 1935 National Labor Relations Act, oversaw the act's provisions that allowed for union organization and collective bargaining. In 1938, the Fair Labor Standards Act, for the first time in American history, set a minimum wage and progressive stages toward a 40-hour workweek.

The surprise Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, brought America fully into World War II and out of the Depression. That Americans died in a sneak attack galvanized the country behind the war effort. Isolationists and anti-imperialists threw in the towel. More than

16,300,000 Americans served in the military during the war. Over 400,000 Americans died, and another 670,000 were wounded.[26] As war production geared up on the home front, women like never before entered the workforce, in part replacing men who were overseas. They were epitomized in the famous "Rosie the Riveter" poster. Scientists were organized into two major secret research projects to develop radar and the atomic bomb. The entire country was mobilized for the war effort—no sacrifice was too small to support the boys at war or to maintain the nation's security. Posters on the fences of defense plants and military installations reminded workers of their responsibility: "What you see, what you hear, when you leave, leave it here."

Some wartime paranoia about spies and the protection of war secrets may be understandable, but army lieutenant general John L. DeWitt, Commanding General of the Western Defense Command and Fourth Army, mixed paranoia with racial stereotypes and in so doing began one of the most egregious episodes in American history. He wanted President Roosevelt to designate military areas from which Japanese aliens, Japanese American citizens, alien enemies other than Japanese aliens, and other suspicious persons would be excluded. Claiming that the Japanese race was an enemy race and that even

Many Japanese-Americans were gathered and placed in internment camps following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Here, detainees are lined up outside a cafeteria. National Archives and Records Administration.

those who were supposedly Americanized in second and third generations had undiluted racial strains, the Japanese had to be kept from sabotaging infrastructure and defense plants, causing damage in populous areas, and signaling from the coastline. He counted 112,000 so-called potential enemies of Japanese extraction—14,500 in Washington, 4,000 in Oregon, and 93,500 in California. In asking the secretary of war to implement his plan, DeWitt noted menacingly the fact that at the time of his writing to the secretary on February 14, 1942, no Japanese plots having been uncovered was proof that they were under way.[27]

Only five days later, Roosevelt approved the military areas DeWitt wanted. Then, on March 18, the president signed Executive Order no. 9102, which established the War Relocation Authority (WRA) and placed it under the Office for Emergency Management in the Executive Office of the President. The director of the WRA was given authority to evacuate such persons as necessary, provide for "the relocation of such persons in appropriate places," and provide for their needs and supervise their activities. Thus began the internment of Japanese aliens and citizens in the western halves of Washington, Oregon, and California as well as the southern third of Arizona under the WRA. The WRA set up 10 relocation centers and a refugee shelter in New York. Over 110,000 Issei and Nisei, who left some $200,000,000 in assets behind, were moved through assembly centers into relocation centers during World War II. The majority were American citizens. Some Japanese were permitted to live outside of the centers, but not in military areas, and resettled in the Midwest. The WRA was disbanded in 1946. In America, racism always trumped civil rights, as America's African American and native citizens knew so well.

The America that emerged victoriously from World War II was a changed place. Women had attained a new status during the war. Not only were they home front heroes in wartime production, but they also had a new status in the military. President Roosevelt signed the act forming the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC) on May 15, 1942. As the name implied, however, the WAAC was not an official part of the army; its purpose was to train women to do jobs that free men up to fight the war. By the end of the war, about 200,000 women had served in the corps in more than 150 noncombat positions. Unlike the regular segregated army, African American women were fully integrated into the WAAC and given equal opportunities. Forty of the first 450 officer candidates selected were African American women. On July 1, 1943, Roosevelt signed an act establishing the Women's Army Corps, granting the former WAAC full military status.

African American men and women returned home as victorious heroes of the war to de facto discrimination in the North and de jure discrimination in

the South. This fact helped to fuel the movement for civil rights, but it would be the federal government that took the first step. In July 1948, President Harry Truman issued two executive orders. Executive Order no. 9980 created the Fair Employment Board to oversee the end of racial discrimination in federal employment. Executive Order no. 9981 created the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services, which was to desegregate the military. By October 1954, the last all–African American military unit had been disbanded. This, of course, did not necessarily mean that discrimination had ended. Even before America entered the war, Roosevelt had issued Executive Order no. 8802 in June 1941 to avert a threatened protest march of 100,000 African Americans on Washington, D.C. The order outlawed discrimination in defense industries and government service.

With Europe completely decimated, the United States could not return to the comfortable isolation it once had. It had used the atomic bomb for the first time in Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, and three days later on Nagasaki, leaving tens of thousands of Japanese dead and wounded. The Japanese surrendered, and the United States was the world's only nuclear power. America found itself in an uneasy alliance with Soviet Russia, which was unwilling to give up most of the territory it had liberated from Germany. By 1949, Russia had the bomb, too, and the Cold War was well under way. Thus the United States led the Western effort to contain Communism at any turn. To the dismay of the old isolationist faction that had killed the United States' entry into the League of Nations, the United States joined the United Nations (UN), albeit with a permanent seat on the Security Council that gave it veto power over any international actions of which it did not approve.

The Cold War was more than a number of protracted military engagements fought by stand-ins for the United States and Russia. The two superpowers set out on a course of deterrence based on mutually assured destruction; that is, if you use nuclear weapons first, we will bomb you into oblivion. Massive nuclear arms buildups took place to the extent that any efforts at limiting weapons by treaty took place in the language of reducing overkill capacity. Thus, even as the boom of the late 1940s and 1950s progressed—affordable, generic housing developments sprung up all over the nation, babies were being born in unprecedented numbers, the economy was humming, the GI Bill made college accessible to millions of veterans—there was a pall over the nation. The threat of nuclear war was real. Schoolchildren were regularly drilled for that eventuality. Teachers instructed their students that at the sound of a special alarm, they were to immediately and in total silence stand up from their wooden desks, get down on all fours in a ball under their desks, and cradle their heads in their

arms until further notice. The kids had another way of putting it: get under your desk and kiss your behind good-bye.

Senator Joseph McCarthy, a Republican from Wisconsin, fed on this fear. In a 1950 speech, he claimed to have evidence that there were 205 known Communists working in the State Department. Until he was censured by the Senate in December 1954, he ruined scores of lives and careers in a witch hunt for Communists and Communist sympathizers in politics, government, the entertainment industry, and the military. He was so bold even to take on President Eisenhower, the hero of World War II. This Red Scare, like the scare of the 1920s, soon dissipated with his demise, but it demonstrated the power that the fear of alien, godless Communism held in America, a fear that permitted people's rights to be abandoned in the name of liberty.

On the surface, though, America looked like a happy, innocent place filled with smiling white teenagers in souped-up jalopies lined up at diners for burgers and fries. They were listening to rock 'n' roll on their car radios, the newest sensation. Elvis Presley was the symbol for this enthusiastic, wild music. Some claimed his music to be satanic, even though its roots were in African American gospel music and blues. When Ed Sullivan, the host of the country's then most popular variety show and a must for family viewing on Sunday nights, had Presley on his show, he assured Americans that Elvis was a good boy. Rock 'n' roll was here to stay, no matter what parents thought of it.

Beneath the surface of the supposedly placid 1950s, the fight for African American civil rights was intensifying. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, first convened in 1909, decided to pursue legal avenues as well as social action to further the rights movement. In 1940, the association created its Legal Defense and Education Fund, which began to have successes in the courts. In 1946, white election primaries were declared unconstitutional, and so was segregated interstate bus travel. More favorable rulings followed, and in 1954, the Supreme Court decided in *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka* that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. President Eisenhower punctuated this landmark ruling when he used federal troops to enforce integration at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957. In that year, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., whose father and namesake had been leading civil rights protests since the 1930s, began the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to coordinate nonviolent protests against discrimination, using African American churches as bases of operation.

The SCLC and other civil rights organizations kept the pressure up into the 1960s with sit-ins at lunch counters, freedom rides through the South,

A group of people hold signs and carry American flags, protesting the admission of nine African-American students to Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, 1957. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

boycotts, marches, and demonstrations. Even though King was adamant that nonviolence be the hallmark of the movement, civil rights workers and leaders were killed and wounded in their pursuit of freedom. Civil rights work was not for the timid or faint of heart. The Kennedy administration was sympathetic to the movement. Kennedy, like Eisenhower, had to federalize state guard troops, this time at the University of Alabama in June 1963, to enforce integration. The drive for civil rights was moving inexorably forward, even through the drama of the Cuban missile crisis and the first commitment of troops to Vietnam. The Soviet menace was still very much alive, and the Kennedys were good Cold Warriors.

In August 1963, the civil rights movement came together with a march on Washington, D.C. Some 250,000 people showed up in support of African American civil rights and pending legislation to enforce them. Martin Luther King delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech in front of the Lincoln Memorial. Scarcely three months later, John Kennedy would become the victim of assassination in Dallas, Texas. His successor, Lyndon Johnson, himself a supporter of African American civil rights, cajoled Congress, in which he had long served and accumulated unprecedented power as a senator, to pass the 1964 Civil Rights Act in honor of the dead president. This act pro-

hibited discrimination in public establishments, including schools, based on race, color, religion, or national origin. It went beyond African American and white to address human issues. The subsequently passed Voting Rights Act of 1965 mostly reinforced previous legislation, but it announced that the practices that had been used to prevent African American from voting would no longer be tolerated.

Backed by law, the civil rights struggle continued. It became, thanks to Martin Luther King, inexorably united with the peace movement. Already in 1965, the Students for a Democratic Society had organized an antiwar protest in Washington, D.C., that drew up to 50,000 protesters. The Vietnam War escalated, and many Americans could see no end to it. By 1968, more than 525,000 American troops were fighting there, and young men were being drafted into what looked like a purposeless war. The old saw that Communism had to be contained even in Southeast Asia no longer seemed relevant to American interests at home. Fatalities rose. The My Lai massacre on March 16, 1968, in which American troops killed 300 innocent villagers, was taken by protesters as proof of American brutality. Then, on April 4, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. The rule of law that Americans cherished seemed to have vanished. African Americans rioted. College campuses broke out in protests. On June 5, Robert Kennedy, who had tried to calm the nation after King's killing, was himself assassinated after winning the California presidential primary.

President Johnson, who by all rights should have been heralded as a hero of the civil rights movement as well as the movement to get health care to the aged (Medicare) and better education to children, was thoroughly discredited for his handling of the Vietnam War. Even his closest advisors abandoned him, and he chose not to run for president in 1968. Richard Nixon, on the other hand, had been vice president for Eisenhower's two terms and claimed to have the expertise to be president and a plan to end the Vietnam War that he could not reveal. The 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago, which nominated Johnson's vice president, Hubert H. Humphrey, known as the Happy Warrior, had the unhappy experience of being painted with Johnson's war legacy. The convention turned into a brawl on the streets between out-of-control protestors and the police.

With Nixon's election, the chaos became even worse. There was another peace protest in Washington, D.C., in November 1969 that brought 500,000 protestors into the capital. On May 4, 1970, Ohio guardsmen panicked during a war protest, killed four students, and wounded nine others. Campuses around the country went up in flames, Reserved Officers Training Corps (ROTC) campus offices being a favorite target. Publication of *The Pentagon Papers* in 1971 revealed the lies the military made to put a good face (from

their point of view) on the war. Nixon had grown used to seeing protestors outside the White House. In March 1973, he essentially declared victory and pulled out the last of the American troops from Vietnam. In 1975, the South Vietnamese surrendered to the Communist North Vietnamese. The last memory most Americans have of the Vietnam War is pictures of helicopters leaving the grounds of the American embassy in Saigon with marine embassy guards knocking Vietnamese allies off the runners of the helicopters as they tried to get out. Nevertheless, some 140,000 Vietnamese settled in the United States after the war.

Nixon called this peace with honor. Returning veterans of the war were accorded no honor; they were just as likely to meet with derision from a divided nation. Americans had never lost a war. The country that had beat Japan once, Germany twice, and stopped the spread of Communism in Korea was bested by a tiny Asian country of determined guerilla fighters. The OPEC oil embargo in October 1973, which left Americans in gas lines and in the dark, intimated that Americans were no longer in control of their own destiny. There seemed to be a crisis in America's self-confidence. The resignations of Nixon's corrupt vice president, Spiro T. Agnew, and then of Nixon himself for impeachable offenses added to this crisis. President Jimmy Carter beat Gerald Ford, Nixon's handpicked successor, in the 1976 election as America turned away from Republican problems and sought a new vitality in the Democrats. Carter, however, appeared only to wonder in amazement over what he called the malaise that had spread over the country. Carter added to the national malaise when he donned his sweater, sat by a fireplace, and told America to conserve energy. His inability first to rescue and then to free hostages from the American embassy in Iran, a payback from Iranian revolutionaries for America's having propped up the corrupt and repressive regime of Shah Reza Palahvi for years, again gave Americans the feeling of powerlessness. The country was looking for a leader who could restore America's confidence in itself.

Throughout this turmoil, the women's rights movement carried on. The 1963 Equal Pay Act required that employers could not use sex as the basis for differential wages. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 had prohibited discrimination based on race, color, religion, or national origin, but it did not explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sex. In this sense, the legislation dealt a blow to the movement. However, women's advocates did get something out of it. Women suddenly appeared in Title VII, which concerned employment practices again. It became an unlawful employment practice to fail to hire, or to hire or fire anyone with respect to compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, based on that person's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. (The Cold War being still very much alive, it was still

expressly lawful to discriminate in employment against members of the Communist Party of the United States or members of any Communist organization required to register with the government.) The 1964 act also established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to oversee the application of the law.

This was not enough. Feminists and their supporters wanted women to have the constitutional protection that was afforded to people of diverse races, colors, religions, and national origins. The National Organization for Women (NOW) was founded in 1966 to promote women's issues and further the cause. Finally, in 1972, the year in which feminist Gloria Steinem's *Ms.* magazine first went on the newsstands, Congress passed what was to be the 27th Amendment to the Constitution—the Equal Rights Amendment. The wording was quite simple: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of sex."[28]

Thirty-eight states had to pass the amendment for it to become part of the U.S. Constitution, and Congress had allowed seven years for that to happen. It appeared at first that easy passage by the states lay ahead, but roadblocks soon developed. Many conservative religious groups considered the ERA an affront to motherhood that would take women from their homes and children. Some critics argued that equal rights would mean unisex toilet facilities, or bathrooms, as they are called in America. These and other specious arguments began to take hold as America's taste for reform soured, and many Americans wanted to return to traditional American values. The ERA was in trouble. In July 1978, NOW organized a rally that brought 100,000 ERA supporters to Washington, D.C., in support of extending the 1979 deadline for ratification. Congress responded positively, but on June 30, 1982, the ERA died. Only 35 states had ratified it, and the new president, Ronald Reagan, and his party did not support it. In spite of the continuing efforts to introduce new ERA legislation, American women, unlike women in the European Union and a number of countries, have no constitutional guarantee of equal rights.

In January 1981, a new sheriff came to town on a high note—the release of the hostages in Iran. The affable Ronald Reagan paraded into Washington, D.C., behind a Hollywood smile that hid his determination to bring in the old and throw out the new. Declaring that the federal government was the problem, not the solution, he envisioned a new day in America—a strong America with a strong defense, less government regulation that strangles business and entrepreneurship, less government spending, and lower taxes. This was a return, in conservative thinking, to the primordial America that had been abandoned in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1982, he cast the Cold War in simple theological terms: the Soviet Union was the Evil Empire. This was a

battle between good and evil, and America would again be strong and win. America's enemies would be rendered harmless, and children could sleep well at night with Fortress America protected by the Strategic Defense Initiative, the so-called Star Wars defense that would obliterate enemy weapons in space before they could reach the United States.

Americans remained, however, vulnerable to terrorist attacks. More than 200 marines were killed in their barracks in Lebanon in 1983. Then, when Iranian terrorists in Lebanon took seven American hostages, Reagan approved a plan to trade arms for the hostages, somehow convincing himself that he was not negotiating with terrorists, which he had publicly vowed never to do. It was then discovered that some of the money the Iranians had paid for arms to fight Iraq had been secretly diverted to the Contras in Nicaragua, who were trying to overthrow the Communist-supported Sandinista regime. Congress had passed legislation twice restricting any aid to the Contras. Some lesser heads rolled when all this came public, and Reagan's popularity took a temporary nosedive. By this time, it was apparent, however, that the Soviet Union was imploding. In 1985, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev opened the Evil Empire to democracy and, eventually, dissolution. When the Berlin Wall came crashing down amid wild celebration in 1989, Reagan was hailed as the hero who ended the Cold War. Now there was only one superpower.

Reagan's political legacy was kept alive by his vice president, George Herbert Walker Bush, who was elected president in 1988. The United States, with a beefed up military, could freely police the world. When Iraq's Saddam Hussein invaded oil-rich Kuwait and annexed it in August 1990, the United States, working through the United Nations, set a deadline for Iraq to exit Kuwait. Iraq ignored the deadline, and military targets were unmercifully bombed the next day. With Iraq still intransigent, the U.S.-led Operation Desert Storm decimated Iraqi troops in the space of four days. More than half a million American soldiers fought in that short war. Bush emerged a war hero all over again. (He had fought and earned medals in World War II.) America had won another war, and quite handily, too, but Saddam Hussein remained in power. It seemed at the time that Bush would easily win reelection, but he made one critical error. He had pledged Reaganesquely not to raise taxes: "Read my lips. No new taxes." Then he raised taxes. It was political suicide.

Democrat William Jefferson Clinton took full advantage of Bush's misstep. Dubbed "the comeback kid" during the presidential campaign, Clinton deftly survived accusations that he was a draft-dodging, pot-smoking womanizer to win the 1992 election. He was quite a change from the stately Reagan and the rather anodyne George Bush. Clinton brought a youthful vitality to the office, reminiscent of the Kennedy years. He also brought a new agenda.

In the first days of his administration, he set out to tackle the issues of gays in the military and national health care. His wife, Hillary, by her own admission not one to sit at home and bake cookies, was put in charge of the Task Force on National Health Care Reform. Extending basic civil rights to gays in the military, or anywhere else, and so-called socialized medicine were absolutely anathema to the political Right. The battle lines that would characterize Clinton's presidency were drawn, and Clinton lost the first two battles. Congress and the nation were clearly divided.

In 1994, the Republicans took over the House of Representatives, and their leader, Newt Gingrich, pledged to stand by the tenets of his Contract with America, which was a reiteration of the conservative mantra against big government. In spite of squabbles over federal budgets, which resulted in the unheard of closing of the government twice in 1995, Clinton and Congress managed to approve two deficit reduction acts, the second of which included tax cuts. Clinton also acquiesced in signing a welfare reform bill in 1966 that put a five-year limit on receiving aid. Annual deficits, which had ballooned with Reagan's defense expenditures, were turned to surpluses by 1998. A growing economy also contributed to the surpluses. Clinton easily won reelection in 1996.

Clinton's ignominious behavior with a White House intern and his lying about it circuitously got him impeached. Investigating the Clintons became a Washington pastime, and the seemingly endless investigation into an Arkansas land deal turned up nothing illegal, but the investigation continued. When the special prosecutor, Kenneth Starr, found out that Clinton had had oral sex with intern Monica Lewinsky, Clinton's sexual behavior suddenly came under investigation. Clinton denied under oath that he had sexual relations with Lewinsky. Evidence said otherwise. Conservative Republicans in the House, many taken there in the Regan landslides, sanctimoniously went about drawing up impeachment articles. Four articles were brought against Clinton, but the House passed only two, accusing Clinton of perjury and obstruction of justice.

Clinton's popularity was quite high when the U.S. Senate convened as a court, with the chief justice of the Supreme Court presiding, on January 14, 1999, to consider the impeachment articles passed by the House. No Americans alive then had ever witnessed an impeachment trial. This was the only such trial of the twentieth century and only the second in American history. For his part, Clinton believed the entire impeachment proceeding to be politically motivated. The Senate trial ended on February 12, and Clinton was still president.

Clinton was said to have an amazing ability to separate his personal problems from his job. Through all the political and personal allegations and inves-

tigations and the Senate trial, the business of the nation had to go on. Saddam Hussein, left in office as president of Iraq after the Gulf War, remained nettlesome. Clinton ordered missile attacks on Iraq in 1993 for hatching a plot to kill former president George Bush on a victory lap through Kuwait; in 1996 for actions against the Kurds; and in 1998 for refusing to allow UN weapons inspectors into the country. Clinton involved himself in the miasma of Middle East peace talks. He sent Americans into Somalia with UN troops in 1993 on a humanitarian mission. He sent troops to Haiti in 1994 to maintain democracy there. He ordered the bombing of Serbia in 1999 to prevent so-called ethnic cleansing. Clinton also had to deal with terrorist attacks on Americans abroad. Osama bin Laden was believed to be the power behind the bombings of U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998. In 2000, terrorists bombed the USS *Cole* off the coast of Yemen. Clinton generally followed a foreign policy that was inclusive, placing value on acting in concert with international organizations and allies and that portrayed the use of American power as bettering the condition of mankind.

It was said of Clinton that you either loved him or hated him. On the whole, Republicans hated him. He had snookered them at every turn and survived as a popular figure. He became the perfect foil for the political Right to raise money and to energize its constituency, which abhorred Clinton's dalliances and violently disagreed with his pro-choice (proabortion), profeminist, progay, internationalist ideas. The presidential election of 2000 pitted George W. Bush, son of George H. W. Bush, whom Clinton had beat in 1992, against Clinton's vice president, Al Gore. Gore tried to distance himself from Clinton the man but embraced his policies and took some credit for his successes. George Bush ran as a so-called compassionate conservative and a born-again Christian who thought Jesus Christ was the greatest philosopher. If there was any doubt that the divided Congress, whose tradition of comity had been destroyed, was an indicator of the cultural divisions in the country at large, that doubt ended with the election.

On November 7, 2000, Americans went to the polls expecting to know the outcome of the election later that evening. It eventually became clear, however, that the entire election would hinge on the vote in Florida. The votes of that state were important because Americans do not elect their presidents by popular vote. A vote for a presidential candidate is, in reality, a vote for an elector pledged to that candidate. That elector then goes to the Electoral College to cast one vote for a candidate, presumably, but not necessarily, for the candidate to which he or she is pledged. The number of electors is in proportion to each state's population, as determined by the decennial census. The winner needed 270 electoral votes for election, and Florida had 25 votes. (Some states divide electors proportionally by the votes candidates receive.

Florida was a winner-take-all state, so whichever candidate won the popular vote would get all the state's electoral votes.)

A legal spectacle ensued when Bush seemed to have won Florida by just a few hundred votes. Democrats wanted a recount in four south Florida counties. Republicans, of course, did not. Federal district courts were petitioned, and the Florida Supreme Court also got into the act. This went on into December. On December 13, the U.S. Supreme Court, itself divided 5–4, effectively ended any more recounting of ballots, and Gore conceded defeat. Bush got Florida's 25 electoral votes, which gave him 271 to Gore's 266. The official vote count in Florida was 2,912,790 for Bush and 2,912,253 for Gore, a difference of only 537 votes. Gore, however, had won the popular vote with 50,989,897 votes (48.38%) to Bush's 50,456,002 (47.87%) votes. Thus, with 543,895 more popular votes than Bush, Gore was the loser.[29]

Bush told the nation he would work hard to earn its trust. *Trust* was a key word because many Americans thought he had stolen the election. With no clear mandate to govern, Bush's presidency got off to a slow start. The terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, however, provided Bush with a voice and a theme: he would be a wartime president. At this time of stress and bewilderment, the nation rallied behind its leader, who declared war on terrorism. The search for Osama bin Laden—wanted dead or alive—took on the language and feel of an Old West sheriff and his possie searching the desert for a notorious stagecoach robber.

The first offensive in the war on terrorism was against Afghanistan scarcely three weeks after the 9/11 attack. A coalition, mostly American, bombed and invaded that country, a known location of terrorist training camps, and by mid-November, the ruling Taliban forces, which took over when the Russian occupation failed, had forsaken the capital city of Kabul. By March, the war was over, and the coalition forces set about installing a new government, propping it up with on-the-ground military support. Osama bin Laden was still on the loose.

On March 19, 2003, the United States, with a few minor coalition partners, invaded Iraq. It was said that Saddam Hussein was hiding weapons of mass destruction, but none was found. The Bush administration has since tried to put the U.S. occupation of Iraq in terms of the second offensive after Afghanistan of the War on Terror. Some critics have charged that it was not faulty intelligence or terrorism (Islamic fundamentalists did not much like Saddam Hussein either) that caused the United States to invade Iraq, but rather Bush's simple desire to avenge Hussein's plot to kill the elder Bush. Other critics have claimed that the real issue was oil.

President Bush declared the Iraq War over on May 1, 2003, yet Americans continued to die there. While Bush handily won a second term in 2004 by

emphasizing his role as a war president (Americans would not dump a war president in the midst of a war), and as terror alerts seemed to be coming out of Washington with increased rapidity as the election approached, the nation was tiring of a war that appeared to have no clear purpose or end. Iraq was looking a lot like Vietnam. When Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast in August 2005, Bush seemed, at first, aloof from the tragedy, and his government's emergency management team was plainly incompetent. Suddenly, Bush did not look much like a leader, as criticism came his way from every direction. His approval rating began to plummet.

In an apparent attempt to regain his stature, Bush gave a speech on the War on Terror on October 6, 2005. Borrowing a term from Ronald Reagan, he equated radical Islam with evil. He went on to say that the struggle against this evil was much like the struggle against Communism. The extremist, radical Muslims wanted to build an Islamic empire "from Spain to Indonesia." As far as Iraq was concerned, "there is no peace without victory. We will keep our nerve and win that victory."[30] Harkening back to Reagan's morality play did not garner Bush much support. When it came to light that the government had been listening to citizens' telephone conversations without court warrants in the name of the War on Terror, Bush supported this abrogation of personal rights and thus appeared to have gone beyond the line Americans traditionally had drawn between personal rights and government power. By the middle of 2006, the majority of Americans were not with him. The War on Terror, in which the Bush administration had tried to include the war in Iraq, became not only a military quagmire, but it also was bankrupting the country. Enormous annual budget shortfalls were securing America's place as the world's largest debtor nation, leaving the United States economically dependent on foreign nations to fund its debt. The once self-assured American public looked to the future with uncertainty and trepidation.

The November 2006 midterm elections were a clear repudiation of Republican support for the war in Iraq. This long war seemed to have no endgame. Furthermore, there were signs that the Republican coalition was breaking apart. Fiscal conservatives were upset with the gigantic federal deficits pushed higher by the Bush administration. The social and religious conservatives that had become the Republican base were shaken by the revelation that Jack Haggard, a minister who was president of the 30,000,000-strong National Association of Evangelicals and a participant in the weekly conference calls from the White House to its important constituents, sought illegal drugs and had a relationship with a male prostitute. Republican scandals abounded. War hero Representative Randy "Duke" Cunningham of the 30th Congressional District of California resigned in disgrace for taking outrageous amounts of bribes from defense contractors. Representative Bob Ney of Ohio's 18th

Congressional District also resigned in disgrace, tainted by money he had taken in the notorious Jack Abramoff influence peddling scheme. Abramoff was a lobbyist with close ties to the Bush administration. Voters had had enough of an unpopular war and rampant religious and financial dishonesty. Democrats were swept into power in the U.S. House, Senate, and many state houses.

The Present

The wealth and debt of the United States bring unimaginable numbers into play. Its gross domestic product was $10,383,000,000,000 in 2002, exceeding all of Europe together. Its stock market capitalization exceeded $14,000,000,000,000; Japan's was less than one-fourth of that. Wealth begets power. The United States' military budget was $399,100,000,000, eclipsing Russia's in second place at $65,000,000,000. However, the United States has been adding to its national debt with annual budget deficits of around $400,000,000,000. Paying interest on the debt has become a major budget item. On March 13, 2006, the U.S. public debt stood at $8,270,385,415,129.52.[31] To put all this in a celestial perspective, the maximum mileage from the earth to the sun is only 94,500,000.

The United States is the world's leading corn and wheat exporter. It produces about 25 percent of the world's beef, veal, and poultry, and it leads the world in consumption of those products. The United States is also among the world's top three producers of coal, natural gas, petroleum, cement, sulfur, aluminum, gold, phosphate rock, lead, and copper. This kind of magnificent abundance coupled with high worker productivity created an American belief in self-sufficiency that manifested itself politically as a persistent streak of isolationism, which continues even today in the midst of the global economy and international misadventures. Yet in this world economy, the United States finds itself a net importer of goods as the wealthy (by world standards) American consumer happily gets more bang for the buck by purchasing cheaper goods made abroad.

Let's examine a snapshot of twenty-first-century America.[32] The typical American enters the world a strapping 7.33 pounds. By adulthood, the typical American woman is 63.8 inches tall, weighs 163 pounds, and measures 36.5 inches at the waist. The typical American man is 69.3 inches tall, weighs 190 pounds, and measures 39 inches at the waist. Americans are big people. Unfortunately, however, American prosperity has its downside. Estimates are that 64 percent of adults are overweight, and 30 percent of those are obese. Fifteen percent of America's teenagers and children age 6–12 are also overweight. In spite of Americans' love affair with sports, 59 percent of adults in

the United States do not engage in vigorous leisure physical activity or exercise, and fully one-third of high school students fail to perform the physical activity recommended for their age group.

The median age of all Americans is 36.2 years. Some 20,000,000 are under five years old, but over 34,000,000 are 65 years old and above. There are already 1,600,000 seniors living in the nation's 18,000 nursing homes. As the post–World War II baby boomer generation nears retirement age, traditionally at 65 years of age, the number of senior citizens will rise dramatically. American women can expect to live, on average, to 79.9; men, to 74.5. About 2,440,000 Americans die each year. Heart disease and cancer are the leading causes of death, accounting for over half of all deaths.

Over 145,000,000 (about 66%) of Americans 16 and over are in the labor force. Most women work. The female labor force participation rate exceeds 70 percent. The full-time workweek is usually 40 hours, eight hours Monday through Friday. Surprisingly, even though the United States is a major world exporter of agricultural products, less than 2 percent of the nation's civilian workforce is engaged in agriculture and forestry. Employment in the manufacturing and industry sectors together is less than half the employment in the service sector. It is said that the majority of America's teenagers have worked in the food service sector, often setting out on a quest for personal independence in the form of a car.

In 2001, Americans traveled 1,938,000,000 passenger miles in their 135,921,000 cars. They vied with 761,000 buses and 92,939,000 trucks. They traveled over 3,982,000 miles of highways, 902 miles of which were in urban areas, and 592,246 bridges, 48,492 of which were in Texas. Nearly 76 percent of Americans drove to work alone and had, on average, a commute of 25.5 minutes, or nearly an hour a day in the car. The typical American household made 2,171 annual vehicle trips: 479 to and from work; 458 shopping; 537 other family or personal business; and 441 social and recreational trips. Sadly, there were also more than 18,000,000 motor vehicle accidents that resulted in 44,000 deaths. Twenty-two of every 100,000 licensed drivers can expect to die in a traffic accident. Drivers in Montana have the greatest chance of dying on the road, with 2.6 deaths per 100,000,000 vehicle miles traveled.[33]

Most Americans (67.1%) own their own homes; the others rent. The average size of families is 3.18 persons, and their median income is $53,692. The average household size is 2.60, with a median income of $44,692. The 73,754,171 owner-occupied homes in the United States have a median value of $151,366. Homeowners with mortgages can expect to have monthly costs of $1,212; those without mortgages can expect to have $345 in monthly expenses. Home to Americans is as much a concept as it is a place. In the

last five years of the twentieth century alone, 112,852,000 Americans (43%) moved to a different home. More than 65,000,000 of them remained in the same county and 25,000,000 in the same state, but more than 25,000,000 moved into a different state. Mobility is a key characteristic of American culture that serves to break down regional variation.[34]

The American economic system allows for and even encourages a wide gap between the richest and the poorest. There is, therefore, class in America, but it tends to be defined primarily by wealth (and education). It is difficult to define the boundaries between upper class and middle class, and middle class and lower class, and efforts to make such definitions miss the point. The point is that whatever class lines may exist can be easily crossed. This is a basic tenet of American beliefs. First generation in America Jewish comedians who had made it, for example, shared a shtick about how poor they were growing up: "My family was so poor that my brother and I had to share a pair of shoes. We each had one!" Pulling oneself up by one's own bootstraps brings social acceptability, if not adulation. In that sense, America is classless—Americans control their own destiny. Some 9,500,000 Americans are self-employed. American society holds hope, therefore, for the 37,000,000 Americans who live below the poverty level, 13,000,000 of them children, and the 40,600,000 Americans who have no health insurance.[35]

For all the hurry in Americans' lives, they are generally affable people who enjoy a good joke, even perhaps a ribald one, and value an active social life. Their affability and casual manner ("Hi ya, pal, glad to meet ya!"), however, may leave those from other cultures with a certain empty feeling. Americans are known the world over for their ability to engage in small talk—the weather, sports, television shows, clothes—on social occasions. Politics and religion are taboo subjects, except among very close friends and family. Americans carefully guard their own private individual beliefs, and they do not expect to argue about them publicly.

Notes

1. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2005,* http://www.census.gov. Unless otherwise noted, this is the source of statistical data throughout this chapter.

2. A word about miles, and, for that matter, acres, is necessary here. The United States adopted its measurement system from the British forefathers of the original colonies, and Americans view kilometers, hectares, or any such metric system nomenclature as foreign. Thus, as foreign terms, most Americans do not know what a kilometer or a hectare is—that a mile equals 1.609 kilometers or that an acre equals 0.405 hectares—and certainly any discussion of distances and areas in those terms

would yield the innocent, good-natured question, "You're not from around here, are ya?" which is not really a question, but rather a conclusion, and requires no response.

3. NYC Company Inc., "NYC Statistics," http://www.nycvisit.com.

4. The League of American Theatres and Producers Inc., "Broadway Season Statistics at a Glance," http://www.LiveBroadway.com.

5. City of Atlanta Online, "History," http://www.atlantaga.gov.

6. Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, "Operating Statistics," http://www.atlanta-airport.com.

7. City of Chicago, "Chicago by the Numbers," http://egov.cityofChicago.org.

8. Stephen S. Birdsall and John Florin, "An Outline of American Geography; Regional Landscapes of the United States," in *The Agricultural Core,* http://usinfo.state.gov.

9. Montana Historical Society, "The Economy," http://www.montanahistoricalsociety.org. See also "The Setting."

10. Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, "The Story of the Los Angeles Aqueduct," http://wsoweb.ladwp.com.

11. It is estimated that Phoenix has since surpassed Philadelphia in population.

12. U.S. Census Bureau, "Fact Sheet: United States, 2004 American Community Survey, Data Profile Highlights," http://factfinder.census.gov.

13. Pew Research Center, Pew Global Attitudes Project, "U.S. Image Up Slightly, but Still Negative," press release, June 23, 2005, http://pewglobal.org.

14. See *Columbia Guide to Standard American English* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); and Evolution Publishing, "Linguistic Geography of the Mainland United States," http://www.evolpub.com.

15. U.S. Department of State, "Basic Readings in U.S. Democracy," http://usinfo.state.gov. See also "Seneca Falls Declaration (1848)."

16. U.S. Civil War Center, U.S. Department of Defense Records, "Statistical Summary—America's Major Wars," http://www.cwc.lsu.edu/cwc/other/stats/warcost.htm.

17. The Avalon Project at Yale Law School, "Second Inaugural Address of James Monroe," March 5, 1821, http://www.yale.edu.

18. U.S. Senate, *American State Papers,* 18th Cong., 2d. sess., 1825, 543, http://www.loc.gov.

19. These are self-reported data available in the *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2005.*

20. See U.S. Information Agency, "One from Many," in *Portrait of the USA,* http://usinfo.state.gov.

21. U.S. Census Bureau, Table 4, in *Technical Paper 29,* March 9, 1999, http://www.census.gov.

22. "One from Many."

23. James N. Gregory, *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and the Okie Culture in California* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 6–11.

24. "Statistical Summary"; Library of Congress, "World War I and Postwar Society, Part I," in *African American Odyssey,* http://www.loc.gov.

25. U.S. Census Bureau, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1957* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960), 462.

26. "Statistical Summary."

27. See Dillon S. Myer, *Uprooted Americans: The Japanese Americans and the War Relocation Authority during World War II* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1971).

28. National Organization for Women, "Equal Rights Amendment," http://www.now.org.

29. Federal Election Commission, "2000 Official Presidential Election Results," http://www.fec.gov.

30. The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "Fact Sheet: President Bush Remarks on the War on Terror," October 6, 2005, http://www.whitehouse.gov.

31. Bureau of the Public Debt, "The Debt to the Penny," http://www.publicdebt.treas.gov.

32. U.S. Census Bureau 2004 American Community Survey & National Center for Health Statistics, "Fast Stats A to Z," http://www.cdc.gov. The following data are taken from these sources.

33. *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2005.*

34. "Fast Stats A to Z."

35. U.S. Census Bureau, "Poverty: 2004 Highlights," http://www.census.gov.

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2

Religion and Thought

Benjamin F. Shearer

In God We Trust.

—The U.S. $1 bill

. . . and God bless America.

—President George W. Bush

The opportunity for religious freedom brought immigrants to America long before the United States became an independent nation. The early immigrants—English, German, Dutch, French—brought their religious convictions and their churches with them to America, as have millions of later immigrants. America proved the perfect place for religious beliefs to evolve and blossom in distinctly American ways.

Freedom of religion is a fundamental American principle, guaranteed in the First Amendment of the Constitution, which prohibits Congress from establishing a state religion or prohibiting the free exercise of religious beliefs. In the course of time, however, the notion of the separation of church and state, even older in origin than Thomas Jefferson's use of the term, became the Amendment's legal foundation, in no small part owing to nativist fears of Roman Catholicism. The separation of church and state, firmly placed into the legal lexicon by a 1947 Supreme Court case, has proved, however, a sticky operational concept.[1] In an overwhelmingly Christian nation, the courts preside over the constant tug and pull on the wall that is to separate religion from government.

Americans' firm conviction that religion is a matter of personal belief that cannot be regulated in any way by any government gives religion a unique

place in American culture. Churches enjoy tax-exempt status as charitable institutions. More important, however, religious beliefs also enjoy freedom from public criticism. Religious beliefs and ideas are considered sacrosanct—they may be publicly expressed without consequence. It is a fact of American social life that religion is a subject to be avoided. Americans generally dislike engaging in informal discussions with no hope of easy solution or compromise. No matter one's personal views, no American would consider a public denunciation of anyone else's religious beliefs. Americans are somehow able to embrace Christians, Jews, Muslims—people of any belief—in their broad definition of what it means to be American, although non-Christians, often grossly misunderstood, have had a difficult struggle for inclusion. When religious beliefs find political positions, however, those political positions are open to public discourse and debate.

Religious beliefs, though considered a private matter, bleed into the public consciousness and culture of America. There is no law that creates a wall of separation between personal religious thought and public action. Americans by and large believe that God is leading the United States, imbuing it with democratic values and the wealth and beauty of its natural environment, and that America has, therefore, the obligation to bring God's democratic and

The back of an American one-dollar bill, which is just one of several places where one can find the words "In God We Trust." © Gramper | Dreamstime.com.

Christian values to the world. Indeed, the hallmark of the predominant Protestantism in America is democratic church structures built on the voluntary association of individuals who, on their own initiative, have transformed themselves into true believers.

God is in the daily commerce and discourse of all Americans. Abraham Lincoln first put the motto "In God We Trust" on American money during the depths of the Civil War. The Cold War put it there for good—America was doing God's work against godless Communism. Presidents since Calvin Coolidge have been lighting the national Christmas tree, and no modern presidential speech could end without invoking God's blessing on the country. Efforts to make the Christmas tree ceremonies that take place in thousands of political jurisdictions each year more inclusive by referring to a so-called holiday tree are labeled pejoratively as political correctness and receive howls of protestation from conservative religious leaders for taking the Christian, Jesus-centered character out of Christmas. Preachers permeate television and radio airwaves. A sneeze in a crowded room draws a chorus of "God bless you."

Overview of Religion in America

Freedom of religion in America precludes asking anyone about personal religious beliefs, whether in job interviews or even in the decennial federal census. The federal government has never collected data on religious adherence. Determining numbers of members of denominations or churches is, therefore, dependent on surveys by various organizations or the denominations themselves. The fact that different religious groups count different things (baptized vs. active members, for example) further confounds efforts to understand American religion through numbers. Nevertheless, a look at the big picture is instructive.

Most Americans believe in God; only around 2 or 3 percent of the population are agnostics or atheists. The United States is about 80 percent Christian; data from independent surveys vary from over 76 to 82 percent. Around 13 percent of Americans are nonreligious or secular, and about 2 percent are Jewish. No other religions—Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Druidism, Sikhism, Scientology, Deism, Taoist, New Age, or Native American—are believed to approach 1 percent of the population.[2]

The 10 largest religious bodies in the United States are the Roman Catholic Church with 67.8 million; the Southern Baptist Convention, with 16.2 million; the United Methodist Church, with 8.2 million; the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, with 6 million; the Church of God in Christ (Black Pentecostal), with 5.5 million; the National Baptist Convention, USA,

with 5 million; the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, with 4.9 million; the National Baptist Convention of America, with 3.5 million; the Presbyterian Church (USA), with 3.2 million; and the Assemblies of God (USA), with 2.8 million. The largest 25 denominations in the United States account for over 148 million people.[3]

Evangelical Protestants (Baptists, Reformed and Confessional churches, nondenominational Christians, Pentecostals, Churches of Christ, etc.) equal the Roman Catholic population at about 25 percent. Mainline White Protestant churches (Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Congregationalists) are about 22 percent of the population. African American Protestants, in African American churches that were created by African Americans in the atmosphere of slavery and segregation, make up about 8 percent of the population.

It is a sad fact of American life that white and African American people could not worship together equally as God's children. Racism permeated every niche of society. On the other hand, owing to the enterprise of early African American religious leaders, African American churches were founded that would become the bedrock religious and social foundation of African American society. The African American churches were legally untouchable and totally independent thanks to the First Amendment. They were also de facto the only African American institutions in America—places where African American culture could flourish, places where African Americans could find pride and independence, places where African Americans were in charge. The Reverend Martin Luther King coordinated the civil rights movement through African American churches. Today, African American churches continue their proud traditions and work for the economic empowerment of the African American population.

American Protestant churches have been divided by race as well as by biblical interpretation. Evangelicals, who believe in a literal, strict interpretation of the Bible but, unlike Fundamentalists, allow for miracles beyond the Bible, have generally shunned social action in favor of personal salvation. Evangelicalism has therefore been inherently individualistic in seeking in its adherents the personal transformation that allows them to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and personal Savior. As a result, evangelicals generally remained aloof from the social and political landscape of the country, until their political power was unleashed by conservative activists. The mainline Protestant churches are not as likely to insist on literal biblical interpretation and have emphasized the importance of social action as a means toward salvation. It was these churches, therefore, especially beginning in the early twentieth century, that actively developed charitable enterprises to serve the poor and disenfranchised and became active in political and social issues and movements.

Fundamentalism, as much a creed as a state of mind, has been a constant force against modernism in American life, even though it was thought many times to have vanished. The name derives from the publication between 1910 and 1915 of *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth* in 12 volumes. Fundamentalists are evangelicals who believe in the religious, scientific, and historical truth of the Bible: Jesus Christ's divinity, virgin birth, atonement for mankind's sins by death on the cross, and resurrection from the dead and the return of Jesus Christ on Judgment Day to judge the living and the dead either for eternal bliss or eternal damnation.[4] Fundamentalists also believe in Bible prophecy.

Armed with biblical truth, fundamentalists have been persistent, if not militant, guerilla warriors in the fight to make their vision of a Christian America come true. This vision harkens back to an America that existed only ideally, but before exegetes questioned the literal meaning of the Bible, before women questioned their traditional roles, before gay rights was a topic of discussion, before evolution became an accepted theory, and before abortion was legalized. Fundamentalists believe they are preserving traditional American values that so-called liberal churches, liberal politicians, and modern American culture have helped to erode. They have enjoyed being outsiders who can pick and choose their battles emboldened by independence and unencumbered by church bureaucracies. They have successfully employed print and broadcast media to get their message out and revivals to convert the nonbelievers. A simple, understandable America prepared for Judgment Day is especially appealing in times of social change and uncertainty. Waves of revivalism swept the country during the Roaring Twenties, during World War II, and in the Vietnam War era.

The American religious landscape is changing rapidly at the turn of the twenty-first century. The Roman Catholic Church continues to grow in absolute numbers with the influx of traditional Catholics from Mexico, even as it closes churches in the inner cities of the Northeast and Midwest. The number of Roman Catholics would be growing even more, but Evangelical Protestantism has made inroads into that population. Over 30 percent of Mexicans coming into the United States are believed to be evangelicals, even though they may maintain traditional Roman Catholic practices and, indeed, may return to Catholicism. The membership in mainline Protestant churches appears to be dwindling in comparison to the burst in evangelical numbers. Americans also seem to be attracted to nondenominational, Bible-based megachurches with congregations of more than 20,000.

There can be no doubt that America is in the midst of another wave of religious awakening. It is evangelical, if not sometimes Pentecostal. It is black and white and multicolored. It is largely Protestant. Americans want traditional

American values, not a tax code–sized volume of church canons. It is New Testament; it is simple; it is salvation from uncertainty, social disconnection, and the vagaries of terrorism.

America's Largest Religious Denominations

The Roman Catholic Church

As the nation's single largest denomination since 1852, Roman Catholicism is a potent religious, political, and social force. The American Church is divided into 33 provinces, each with an archbishop who may or not be a cardinal. There are 281 active bishops in 195 American dioceses, as bishop's ecclesiastical jurisdictions are called. The Church counted 19,081 parishes, 44,487 priests (some 9,500 are retired), 5,568 brothers, 74,698 sisters, and almost 14,000 permanent deacons in 2003. Priests may be diocesan (sometimes called parish priests or secular priests) or members of religious orders. There are 150 religious orders in the United States, and 14,772 of the priests belong to religious orders. Only the deacons are permitted to marry, but, like the priesthood, only men may be admitted. In addition to various charitable activities, the Church also has 585 Catholic hospitals, 7,142 elementary schools, 1,374 high schools, and 230 colleges and universities all over the country.[5]

Today, about 39 percent (25 million people) of the Catholic population is Hispanic, and by 2020, that percentage is expected to reach more than 50 percent. Since 1960, over 70 percent of the growth in the number of Roman Catholics is attributable to the national influx of Hispanics in the population. There are approximately 2.3 million African American Catholics, and about 25 percent (500,000) of the Native American population are baptized Roman Catholics.[6]

Parishes were especially important to the immigrant Roman Catholic Church. Because parish churches were neighborhood churches, and urban immigrants segregated into neighborhoods with others of the same cultural backgrounds, parishes became the hub of social and cultural as well as religious activities. Friday night fish fries with alcoholic beverages and gambling were typical social activities. Bingo games became associated with the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholic Youth Organization provided athletic competition. So strong was the cultural influence of the parishes in heavily Roman Catholic northeastern cities like Philadelphia that when Philadelphians meet each other to this day, no matter their religion, they identify themselves by the parish in which they grew up.

Roman Catholic parishes in 2000 averaged 3,254 members, or 1,269 households. The average non–Roman Catholic congregation averaged only

303 members. Roman Catholics donated $5,864,000,000 to their parishes in Sunday collections during 2002, 90 percent of which remained in the parishes to be used for parish undertakings.[7] Even though about 68 percent of American Roman Catholics are registered in parishes, there is evidence that parish life is no longer what it once was. Around 40 percent of American Roman Catholics think the parishes are too large. Whereas nearly 75 percent went to Mass weekly in the 1950s, that number has now shrunk to 34 percent. In spite of Church rules, three-fourths of Roman Catholics believe one can be a good Catholic without going to church every week.[8]

The American Protestant democratic tradition has always stood in stark contrast to the Roman Catholic Church's nondemocratic tradition, a fact that helped to fuel nativists' fear of a papal takeover of the country as Catholics from Ireland, Italy, Poland, and Germany poured into the country. The Roman Catholic hierarchy—the pope, cardinals, bishops, and priests—has not only guarded against the introduction of doctrinal heterodoxy but has also systematically maintained clerical supremacy in decision making, even down to the appointment of priests to parishes. American Roman Catholics, accustomed to voting for their political leaders, have had no vote on who their parish priest may be, no less on any matters of doctrine. Seventy-two percent of Roman Catholics now want a say in selecting their parish priests.[9] American Roman Catholics are increasingly at odds with the Church's teachings and practices. Sixty-nine percent want to see the Church abandon its prohibition of artificial birth control; 65 percent want priests to be able to marry; and 60 percent want women to be permitted to become ordained priests. Even on the critical issue of abortion, 33 percent of Catholics believe it should generally be available, and 44 percent believe it should be available with further restrictions. It is not surprising, then, that 82 percent of American Roman Catholics believe they can disagree with the pope and still be good Catholics and that 72 percent believe that their consciences should supersede Church teaching.[10] American Roman Catholics seem to have adopted the Protestant majority's belief in the priesthood of believers, in which individual conscience is supreme. The picking and choosing of which Roman Catholic teachings to reject or accept has been called *cafeteria Catholicism,* and it has become so rampant that some Church leaders believe a line needs to be drawn—either be a Roman Catholic, or not.

With majorities of American Roman Catholics believing they could be good Catholics without adhering to their Church's positions on abortion, marriage, divorce, birth control, weekly Mass attendance, and 23 percent even thinking that they could be good Catholics without believing that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, the need for dedicated priests could not be greater.[11] The Roman Catholic priesthood in America, however, had been

in a crisis mode from several directions and for a long time. The average age of American priests is 61. Only 500 new priests were ordained in 2003. As population in general has grown, and the Roman Catholic population in particular has increased, the number of priests has declined. The Church has tried to make up for this decline by developing its lay deaconate program and programs to train lay catechetical teachers, youth ministers, and lay ministers. A 2000 study of the problem found that 2,386 parishes shared a pastor and 2,334 had no resident pastor. Four hundred thirty-seven parishes were receiving pastoral care from someone other than a priest. In the United States in the 1950s, there was one priest for every 650 people. By 1999, the ratio had inflated to 1:1,200. In the West, where the Hispanic population was exploding, the ratio was 1:1,752.[12]

If the shortage of vocations to the priesthood was a serious problem, the increasing and steady revelations that priests had long been sexually abusing children was a crisis of faith of much larger proportion. By 2002, the American public at large was outraged at the way the Roman Catholic Church was handling the scandals; 45 percent of all Americans were dissatisfied, and 25 percent were angry. A week after Pope John Paul II met with American cardinals in Rome in April 2002 about the scandal, 58 percent of Roman Catholics believed the pope had not done enough about it. Sixty-two percent of Roman Catholics were not pleased with the way the American hierarchy was dealing with the crisis. Eighty-three percent of Roman Catholics wanted to see law enforcement called in when church leaders learned of alleged child abuse by priests.[13]

In June 2002, Bishop Wilton D. Gregory, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, addressed his fellow bishops on the sexual abuse scandals. He called it "a very grave crisis," noting that the bishops, singly and as a group, had worked on the sexual abuse issue since 1985, listened to victims and consultants, and finally adopted principles in 1992 to be followed when sexual abuse was alleged. Gregory acknowledged that the work the bishops had done was "overshadowed by the imprudent decisions of a small number of Bishops" during the past 10 years. He confessed that it was the fault of the bishops that sexually abusive priests were allowed to remain in positions that allowed them to abuse again; that law enforcement was not called in; that fear of scandal permitted abuse to continue; and that victims were sometimes treated as adversaries. He apologized for all the bishops and resolved to change the way things would be done in the future.[14]

The Conference of Bishops created the National Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People to study the problem. In February 2004, the board reported its findings: 4,392 priests (4%) had been

accused of molesting minors between 1950 and 2002, and the Church had spent over $500,000,000 in dealing with the reported 10,667 accusations. Eighty-one percent of the victims were male; 2,000 children under 11 years old had been abused by pedophile priests; 78 percent of the allegations involved children 11–17 years old. Allegations of abuse of minors rose in the 1960s, peaked in the 1970s, and occurred all over the country.[15] With release of the report, Bishop Gregory assured that the bishops had put a system in place to respond at once to abuse allegation, assist victims, and take offenders out of the ministry.[16]

The anger of most Roman Catholics was directed at the bishops, rather than at the clergy in their parishes, where priests continued to earn high marks throughout the unfolding of the scandal. In fact, between 2001 and 2002, Sunday giving in the parishes rose 4.8 percent. In 2002, America's 15.9 million registered, active Roman Catholic households gave the Church, on average, $455. Parishes are heavily dependent on Sunday collections for their revenues. Typically, parishes spend 42 percent of their revenues on salaries and the remaining 58 percent on plant and program expenses. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, through which the bishops exercise their pastorate for the nation, also asks Roman Catholics to support other activities through special annual collections. Money is collected to aid the Roman Catholic Church in central and eastern Europe, to fund Catholic Relief Services and migration and refugee services. The Catholic Campaign for Human Development uses donations to fight the root causes of poverty in America. There is a collection for Roman Catholic home missions, black and Indian missions, and the Church in Latin America. Peter's Pence is a collection to enable the pope to respond to aid requests by those who have been victims of war, oppression, and natural disasters. Other collections support world evangelization, third world food projects, institutions in the Holy Land, and Catholic University of America, which was founded by the American bishops. Unlike other denominations, the Roman Catholic Church nationally does not give direct financial support to Roman Catholic colleges and universities other than Catholic University.[17]

The work of the Roman Catholic Church in America is furthered by some 135 national organizations and hundreds of local lay groups. The Knights of Columbus is the largest such group, with 1.6 million members. The members of this fraternal society donated $128.5 million to charities in 2002 and performed 60.8 million hours of volunteer service. The Knights of Peter Claver and Ladies Auxiliary, with 45,000 members, serve the specific needs of African American Catholics and annually donate hundreds of thousands of dollars and hours of service. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul's 102,000 members visit homes, hospitals, day care facilities for the aged, and prisons.

Their donations and services were valued at $335 million in 2002. These and many other organizations like the Jesuit Volunteer Corps vitally involve the laity in fulfilling the Church's missions to serve others.[18]

The Roman Catholic Church in America, through the teachings and pronouncements of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, has taken the position that the "separation of church and state does not require division between belief and public action, between moral principles and political choices, but protects the right of believers and religious groups to practice their faith and act on their values in public life." Faithful citizens who "bring their moral convictions into public life," therefore, "do not threaten democracy or pluralism but enrich them and the nation." In regard to abortion—"always intrinsically evil"—the bishops counseled Roman Catholics in public positions that "acting consistently to support abortion on demand risks making them cooperators in evil in a public manner."[19] In concert, of course, with the Vatican, the American bishops have been a steady voice in speaking for the sanctity of all life, not just the unborn. Thus they have reminded the faithful that human cloning, euthanasia, assisted suicide, the death penalty for capital crimes, and targeting civilians in war all violate that fundamental principle. Furthermore, Catholics have the obligation to protect family life, pursue social and economic justice, serve the poor and the helpless, care for the environment, and work to eliminate poverty all over the world.[20] The bishops have also supported an amendment to the Constitution that would define marriage as a union between a man and a woman, arguing that while they decried the "unjust discrimination, harassment or abuse" against homosexuals, homosexual unions are "inherently non-procreative" and therefore cannot have the status of marriage.[21]

Baptists

The Southern Baptist Convention

The first Baptist church in America was founded in 1638 in what would become Rhode Island. An offshoot of English Puritanism, Baptists shunned any state-sponsored religion and believed that baptism should be performed only on those who had proved their faith. In 1707, the Philadelphia Baptist Association was formed, which included churches in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Rhode Island, and also included churches in Connecticut, Maryland, Virginia, and New York. At the time of the American Revolution, there were about equal numbers of Anglicans and Baptists in the colonies, but their numbers were smaller than those of Congregationalists and Presbyterians. By 1800, however, Baptists were the largest denomination in the United States, its numbers having swelled with new black and white

members after the Great Awakening, which spread conversion through the country from the 1730s into the 1770s.

In 1814, Baptists formed the General Missionary Convention, but it was divided between North and South over the slavery issue in 1845. Thus was born the Southern Baptist Convention, today the largest of America's Baptist groups, the single largest Protestant and evangelical group, and the largest religious body in the country after the Roman Catholic Church. Contrary to what its name implies, the Southern Baptist Convention is much more than a regional church. Although the heaviest concentrations of Southern Baptists remain in the Old South, churches have been established throughout the country, including in the Northeast, Midwest, mountain states, and Southern California. Between 1952 and 1990 alone, over 8,500 new churches were established in the United States.[22]

The Southern Baptist Convention is not just an American church. Southern Baptists take the call to evangelize the world very seriously. Since 1846, its International Mission Board has sent over 15,000 missionaries all over the world.[23] At the close of 2005, the board had 5,036 field personnel under appointment and 6,797 student volunteers working abroad. In 2005 alone, overseas baptisms totaled 459,725. Membership came to 7.3 million in 108,713 overseas churches. In 2005, Southern Baptists contributed $133.9 million in support of the annual International Mission Study and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, in addition to $22.9 million for world hunger and disaster relief.[24]

Southern Baptists hold the Bible to be divinely inspired by a triune God and without error. The Bible always trumps any statement of belief. Jesus Christ is God the Son incarnated in a virgin birth, who died on the cross to redeem mankind from sin and will return in glory to judge the world. Salvation is possible only for those "who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour." Because each person is accountable to God—called *soul competency*—there is no salvation outside of a person's relationship with God. Good works or church attendance will not bring salvation. Personal faith in Christ as Lord is a requirement of salvation, which involves regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. Regeneration is "a work of God's grace" that, with repentance, changes the heart and results in a new birth as the sinner turns to God and commits to Jesus Christ. Justification is "God's gracious and full acquittal . . . of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ." Sanctification sets the believer apart to God's purposes and enables "progress toward moral and spiritual maturity." Glorification is "the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed." Once accepted by God, true believers filled with God's grace never fall away from the state of grace, even though they may occasionally go astray.[25]

Southern Baptists accept the priesthood of all believers, which means true believers have the same rights as ordained ministers to interpret scripture and talk with God. Only men, however, are permitted to be pastors. Each local congregation is autonomous of the state and general conventions and operated through democratic processes. Southern Baptist congregations observe Sundays as days of public and private worship and devotion and *Christ's two ordinances* (called *sacraments* by some denominations): baptism by immersion in water and the Lord's Supper. The members of the congregations are expected to support evangelism and mission activity and an adequate system of Christian education, in which teachers' freedom is limited "by the preeminence of Jesus Christ" and by "the authoritative nature of the Scriptures." Fifty-two colleges and universities, two Bible schools, and one academy are members of the Association of Southern Baptists Colleges and Schools. Congregation members are also to exercise good stewardship by contributing "cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth."[26]

The Southern Baptist faith has retained the long Baptist support for the principle of the absolute separation of church and state. It also supports cooperation among New Testament churches for justified ends. The Convention's teachings on social issues are "rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ." Good Christians have the duty to seek peace and pray for the "reign of the Prince of Peace," to "speak on behalf of the unborn" and to "provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick." They should also "oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography." In regard to family matters, the Southern Baptist Convention holds that "God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society." Because both husband and wife are created in God's image, both are of equal worth in the eyes of God. The husband, however, has the "God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family." The wife "is to submit herself to the servant leadership of her husband" and she has "the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation."[27]

National Baptist Convention, USA Inc.

The National Baptist Convention, USA, is a historically African American church with reported membership of 5 million adherents and 33,000 churches, making it America's sixth largest religious body and the largest of the African American Baptist churches.[28] This convention traces its origin to

1886 in the movement ongoing since the 1830s of African American Baptists to separate from white conventions and form their own cooperative organizations. The movement was replete with regional conventions, consolidations, and schisms. By 1916, the National Baptist Convention, USA, emerged.

An important concept to the Convention is the Baptist tradition and ideal of voluntary membership; that is, the Convention exerts no control, theological or otherwise, over its members. These are matters for local churches. The Convention's task is help the membership effectively realize goals on which they all agree. A board of directors governs the national convention. Every fifth year, a president is elected by member churches at Annual Session. The president and various officers are members of the board of directors as well as the presidents of the 62 constituent state conventions, representatives of the convention's boards and auxiliaries, and 29 members at large. The convention's 10 boards and auxiliaries deal with such matters as Christian education, evangelism, missions, and music. There is also a Woman's Auxiliary.

The National Baptist Convention, USA, is not theologically innovative; that is, it adheres to traditional Baptist beliefs in grace as a gift from God available to all who will believe, repentance and justification, regeneration (being born again), and sanctification. It holds the Bible to be the divinely inspired truth without error and to hold God's plan for salvation and the standards for human conduct. Two sacraments are recognized: baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper. Mankind divides into the righteous and the wicked in death and thereafter, awaiting the end of the world, when both the living and the dead will be judged to heaven or hell.[29]

The National Baptist Convention of America Inc.

The National Baptist Convention of America came from the same roots as the National Baptist Convention, USA. In 1895, three African American Baptist conventions merged into a single entity to unify domestic and international goals, taking the name the National Baptist Convention of the United States of America. This made it the largest African American church in America. In 1915, however, the unity of the group was destroyed over a debate about ownership of its Publishing Board. Thus two separate groups emerged. Efforts to come back together, notably during Annual Session in 1988 to protest apartheid, failed. The National Baptist Convention of America, which had remained unincorporated since the 1915 split, finally was incorporated in 1987 with headquarters in Shreveport, Louisiana. Doctrinally, the two churches have no differences.

The National Baptist Convention of America has about 3.5 million members and more than 8,000 churches in the United States. The United States'

eighth largest church, it is active in religious publishing and education and is committed to evangelism at home and abroad. Missions are supported in the Caribbean, Panama, and Ghana. The Convention is also committed to freedom of religion, civil liberty, social justice, and equality.[30]

Other Baptist Churches

The voluntary nature of Baptist conventions and associations, leaving local churches autonomous, is a democratic tradition that has made Baptists susceptible to divisions and regroupings. In 1988, the National Missionary Baptist Convention of America split from the National Baptist Convention of America Inc., not because of doctrine, but because of its publishing board and other earthly matters. This historically African American convention ranks as the 12th largest religious body in America, with 2.5 million members.[31]

The Progressive National Baptist Convention Inc., also with about 2.5 million members, was formed late in 1961 out of the National Baptist Convention Inc. Ostensibly fighting over the tenure of convention leaders, whose nearly lifetime elections to office kept the convention on a traditional foundation, the real issue was civil rights. The progressives wanted their convention to be fully involved in the movement for human and civil rights and exhibit the fullness of Baptist and American democracy in the election of its leadership. They were happy to give Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. a home in an African American Baptist denomination. To this day, the Progressive National Baptist Convention actively supports and advocates for complete human liberation through voter registration drives, affirmative action, and African American economic empowerment. All church leadership positions are open to men and women. The convention squarely stands for fellowship, progress, and peace.[32]

American Baptist Churches USA claims to be "the most racially inclusive body within Protestantism" and will soon have no racial or ethnic majorities. The United States' 20th largest denomination, with 1.43 million members and about 5,800 congregations, the American Baptists are the northern remnant of the 1845 split over slavery that created the Southern Baptist Convention. It was incorporated in 1907 as the Northern Baptist Convention, renamed the American Baptist Convention in 1950, and took its current name in 1972. American Baptists, who favor ecumenical ties, have always been actively involved in direct social outreach, including the civil rights movement, the empowerment of women, and a number of ecological and social justice issues.[33]

The Baptist Bible Fellowship International (BBFI) is ranked 22nd of America's largest denominations, with 1.2 million members. Located in Springfield, Missouri, with its flagship Baptist Bible College, BBFI was

officially organized in 1950, but its roots lie in the 1920s. A group of Baptist preachers were alarmed that modernism was creeping into the Baptist Church, and they wanted to return to the fundamentals. This independent, fundamentalist Baptist group claims more than 4,000 churches across the country that support their missionary work.[34]

Methodists

The United Methodist Church

The United Methodist Church is the third largest religious body in the United States and the largest of the mainline Protestant and Methodist denominations, yet it has less than half the members of the United States' largest evangelical denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention. Curiously, as the Church has lost membership in the United States, declining now to 8.2 million from 10.7 million in 1970, it has more than tripled its international membership to 1.5 million in the same period. In the United States, there are almost 45,000 clergy members and over 35,000 local churches; 1,050 people are involved in the Church's global ministries, with 120,000 volunteers working in 100 countries.

The U.S. church is organized into five jurisdictions, in which there are 50 Episcopal areas, 63 annual conferences, and 520 districts. Bishops are elected by the conferences from among conference elders (ordained ministers). The first woman bishop was elected in 1980, and there are currently 15 active women bishops. Women clergy have been ordained since 1956, and they now number over 12,000. A General Conference is convened every four years, its members elected by the annual conferences in equal numbers of lay and clergy delegates. This body makes official church pronouncements and updates *The Book of Discipline,* which contains all the Church's theological and other positions. The United Methodists have built an extensive educational system that includes 10 universities, 82 four-year colleges, and 8 two-year colleges, along with 13 theological schools and 10 precollegiate schools. In fulfillment of their belief in doing good works for society, the Methodists also have 120 community service ministries; 83 hospitals and health care systems; 78 children, youth, and family services; and 297 ministries for the aged. In 2001, local churches gave over $5 billion for all the Church's programs.[35]

Methodism, as a movement inside of the Church of England based on the teachings of John and Charles Wesley, did not organize separately until George Washington was president. There were few Methodists in the American colonies—fewer than 7,000 in 1776. By 1850, however, there were over 1.6 million Methodists, and by 1890, over 6.2 million.[36] The growth of Methodism in America was nothing short of phenomenal, even after black

congregations separated from the main church in 1816 and 1821 and pro-slavery southern Methodists broke away to form their own church in 1845. The northern and southern branches were not reunited until 1939, but the black congregations remain separate. The United Methodist Church of today was formed in 1968 when the Methodists united with the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

The United Methodist Church affirms basic Christian beliefs in a triune God; the fall of mankind; and salvation through Jesus Christ, who died and rose from the dead to atone for sin and who will come to judge the living and the dead. It accepts the authority of the Bible on matters of faith and recognizes the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper. The Holy Spirit brings redemptive love, and faith in Jesus Christ brings forgiveness, reconciliation with God, and transformation. The United Methodist Church is overtly ecumenical, believing in "the essential oneness of the church in Christ Jesus." The Methodists are not so much concerned with doctrine other than it affects discipleship, as with implementing "genuine Christianity in the lives of believers." Wesleyan teaching lends the gentle message to Methodism that God created a good world with the intention that mankind be holy and happy. God's prevenient grace prompts us to please God and seek repentance and faith. With repentance comes justifying grace, forgiveness, and a true change of heart. This new birth brings sanctifying grace, which leads to Christian perfection, a state in which love of God and others fills the heart. In Methodist theology, faith and piety are not enough. They must be accompanied by the performance of good works and discipline. Thus salvation "always involves Christian mission and service to the world," and "love of God is always linked with love of neighbor, a passion for justice and renewal of the life of the world."[37]

The Social Creed adopted by the United Methodist Church and contained in *The Book of Discipline* acknowledges the "blessings of community, sexuality, marriage and the family" and affirms the duty to preserve and enhance the natural world. Furthermore, it affirms human and property rights for all people, including minorities of all kinds, and world peace, and expresses belief in collective bargaining, "responsible consumption," and "the elimination of economic and social distress."[38]

The United Methodists' charism is to be involved in social action, rather than living separately from the world. Thus the Church has taken a number of positions on social issues. The Church has, for example, opposed capital punishment and recognized the right to civil disobedience on the demands of conscience. It has opposed human cloning but approved human gene therapies that cannot be passed on to others when used to alleviate suffering. It has opposed military service and supported ministry to conscientious objectors.

It has supported equal rights for homosexuals, although self-proclaimed active homosexuals cannot become ordained ministers or be appointed to Church positions because homosexuality violates Christian teachings. It has rejected differing social norms for men and women and has supported a law to define marriage as the union of a man to a woman. The Church has opposed late-term abortion, and while not approving abortion of any kind, it has supported legal abortion in conflicting circumstances when it may be justified.[39]

The African American Methodist Churches

Racism, not theological difference, caused African American Methodists to form their own congregations under their own initiative. The African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC) traces its beginnings to a black mutual aid society that was founded in 1787 in Philadelphia by former slave Richard Allen. He became pastor of Bethel AMEC in 1794 and succeeded later in establishing the AMEC as an independent organization. Today, AMEC has 2.5 million followers in the United States, and its successful missionary activities have helped it to establish congregations in 30 countries.[40] The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ), now with 1.43 million members, was first organized in New York City in 1796. Its first church, Zion, was opened in 1800 while still part of the white Methodist establishment. By 1821, however, AMEZ became independent, and James Varick was ordained its first black bishop in 1822.[41]

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The fourth largest church in America, with nearly 6 million members in the United States and a worldwide membership exceeding 12 million in 26,670 congregations and with over 330 world missions, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) is one of the world's fastest growing religions, yet it is also perhaps the most misunderstood. Many Americans think the LDS is not even a Christian church, a confusion generated in part by the LDS claim that it is not a Protestant church and by the public habit of referring to Latter-day Saints (their preferred title) as Mormons.

In fact, however, the LDS believes itself to be the restored church of Jesus Christ, which had been rent asunder first by the Roman Catholic Church and then by various Protestant movements. The early Christians were the first saints, and owing to God's revelations to the prophet Joseph Smith that he would restore God's church on earth, the new church would be composed of latter-day saints. Smith is said to have had revelations directly from God, father and son, beginning in 1820, when he was only 14 years old. In 1823, a resurrected prophet who lived in America around 420 C.E. first

The inside of the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah. © Karimala | Dreamstime.com.

appeared to Smith. In 1827, this prophet, Moroni, led Smith to a hillside outside Palmyra, New York, where he had buried the gold plates on which the prophet Mormon had condensed the ancient history and religious beliefs of the Western Hemisphere. By 1830, Smith had translated and published *The Book of Mormon* and established the Church of Christ in Fayette, New York. In 1838, the church took its current name, based on new revelation.

As God's chosen, Smith and his church set out on a mission to build the perfect society, Zion, away from the sinful world. They went to Ohio, Illinois, and Missouri, finding themselves outcasts yet still gaining converts wherever they went. Smith was killed in 1844 by a local mob in Carthage, Illinois, outside the LDS settlement in Nauvoo. Brigham Young led most of the Latter-day Saints from Missouri to Utah in 1847, where they began a successful colonization effort. (Some Latter-day Saints remained behind in Independence, Missouri, and formed the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, now called the Community of Christ, with about 250,000 members.)

The LDS wanted to create a theocracy, with church leaders in charge of all activities. This was to be a society built on cooperation, rather than competition; group activity, rather than individual prowess; and the stewardship

of resources for the common good of all. In 1848, the LDS created the provisional state of Deseret, with church leaders in civil positions, and unsuccessfully sought statehood. Utah would not become a state until 1896, and suspicion of LDS beliefs and practices was the reason. Most suspicious was the early Mormon acceptance and encouragement of polygamy, which seemed to violate basic Christian doctrine concerning marriage and the family and certainly violated basic American values as understood by the politicians who would legislate on Utah statehood.

LDS beliefs held the Church outside the mainstream of Catholic or mainline and Evangelical Protestant thinking. In LDS parlance, all non-LDS believers are gentiles, including Jews. The God of the LDS is three persons with a single purpose, but separate beings. The LDS president is considered a prophet, who speaks directly with God, but all saints are also entitled to revelation. The LDS accepts the Bible and *The Book of Mormon* as divinely inspired scripture as well as *Doctrine and Covenants* (revelations since the founding of the Church) and a selection of Joseph Smith's writings, the *Pearl of Great Price.* Life is considered a test—human beings had once lived in the spirit world with God, but, with no memory of that spirit existence, were given physical bodies to prove themselves worthy to return to God. LDS doctrine holds further that marriages and family relationship, when *sealed* in the temple, last throughout eternity. Furthermore, because physical death does not mean automatic judgment to heaven or hell, relatives may have family members baptized or their marriages sealed in the temple to ensure their eternal bliss. Thus genealogy is important to the LDS.

Being a Latter-day Saint is not just adhering to doctrine, but it is also a lifestyle. Latter-day Saints are expected to live by the highest standards of honesty and integrity (that is why billionaire Howard Hughes wanted Latter-day Saints as his accountants), obey the law, and avoid premarital sex and extramarital affairs. The Church opposes all kinds of immoral behaviors, including gambling, pornography, and abortion (with certain exceptions). Latter-day Saints are also expected to tithe to the church 10 percent of their income, fast for two meals one day a month, and use that money to help the poor, do missionary work, and serve the church, all the time following Joseph Smith's 1833 health code. This code, the World of Wisdom, forbids the use of alcohol, tobacco, tea, and coffee and the misuse of drugs.

The structure of the church and its support organizations make for a tightly knit community of believers. The LDS is notably nonclerical. Local congregations, called *wards,* are presided over by unpaid bishops with fixed terms. *Stakes* are groups of wards. Males begin the three orders of priesthood at age 12. By 18, they may be affirmed the highest order, Melchizedek priesthood, which has in ascending order the offices of elder, high priest,

patriarch, seventy, and apostle. The church is governed by the First Presidency (the president and two counselors) and the 12 Apostles. On a president's death, the man who has been an Apostle the longest ascends to the presidency. The Seventies—there are now five groups of them—implement the policies of the First Presidency and the Apostles. Saints have the right to vote to uphold officers and administrative proposals. Latter-day Saints meet in meetinghouses or chapels ordinarily to worship. Temples, of which there are over 700 worldwide, are used for the administration of ordinances.

The LDS operates an educational system with seminaries, institutes of religion, and the three campuses of Brigham Young University. It has an extensive Sunday school program for members 12 and older. Its Young Men and Young Women organizations for ages 12–17 provide social, cultural, and religious programs. The Primary operates nurseries on Sundays and assists parents in teaching the Gospel to children age 3–11. Furthermore, LDS families have a pair of priesthood holders visit them once a month for home teaching.

While more than half of the population of Utah remains Latter-day Saints today, the LDS was forced to abandon its communitarian ideals outside the confines of the Church, in which they still survive. The price of statehood was the acknowledgment of competitive capitalism, the selling of Church-owned businesses, and the decoupling of the church from the state. The Manifesto of 1890, the Church's pronouncement that it would no longer tolerate polygamy, was the beginning of that process. Acceptance of polygamy by the LDS had been a major stumbling block to statehood. It would not be until 1978, however, that African American men would be accepted into the priesthood. Women are still excluded from the priesthood.[42]

The Church of God in Christ Inc.

The fifth largest church in the United States is the historically African American Pentecostal Church of God in Christ, with about 5.5 million members and 15,300 local churches. It was founded and organized by Elder Charles Harrison Mason, who was born in 1866 near Memphis, Tennessee, to a Missionary Baptist family. He and a small band of fellow elders were swept up by the revivalism sweeping the country and especially by the three-year revival taking place in Los Angeles. By 1897, the name of the Church was chosen. By 1907, it was organized by Mason, the Chief Apostle, and a tabernacle was built in Memphis in 1925. Today, the Church is governed through the Chief Apostle, the General Board, and the state jurisdictional bishops, who are elected by the General Assembly from the ordained elders.[43]

The members of this church believe in a triune God; that Christ, born to a virgin, died to atone for human sin; and that the Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit)

brings the plan of salvation to earth, empowering believers to serve the world. The Bible is the only authority on all matters. Human nature is sinful and depraved because Adam ate the forbidden fruit and condemned his progeny to an unholy state. The Holy Ghost redeems human beings through repentance, faith, justification, regeneration, sanctification, and baptism. Baptism in the Holy Ghost follows rebirth (the personal act of repentance is salvation) and is accompanied by speaking in tongues. The Church believes in three ordinances (sacraments): baptism (by immersion), the Lord's Supper, and feet washing. Devils or demons and evil spirits of the spiritual world can be embodied in humans and cast out in the name of Jesus by believers. Divine healing is also practiced by the Church, and miracles can and do occur still, as believers wait for Christ's Second Coming.[44]

Presbyterian Church (USA)

The Presbyterian Church (USA) is the largest of the Presbyterian churches in the United States, claiming 2,363,136 members in 2004 in 11,019 congregations throughout the nation. It is headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky. Although the first American presbytery dates back to Philadelphia in 1706, the American Presbyterian Church experienced a tremendous number of schisms and mergers through the centuries, including a division in 1861 between North and South as the Civil War commenced, which was healed only in 1983 with the reunification of northern and southern branches in the creation of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

The Presbyterian Church bases its beliefs on the Reformed theology of John Calvin as taken to Scotland by John Knox. Primary among these beliefs are the sovereignty of God, predestination (God elects people for service and salvation), faithful stewardship of creation, the two sacraments of baptism (infant baptism recommended, immersion not required) and the Lord's Supper, and seeking social justice while living in accord with God's message. Predestination is perhaps the most controversial Presbyterian belief, for it means that God chooses certain people for salvation, and there is no way to know who, other than oneself, has been elected for salvation. If God has not selected you, you are powerless to do anything about it. Calvin's original doctrine has later been tempered with the understanding that belief in Jesus Christ signifies election by God, and Christ has provided salvation enough for everyone.

Calvin introduced democracy into church governance in direct contradistinction to Roman Catholic clericalism. Presbyterians elect lay people, who are ordained as elders to work with ministers to govern a local church. The group of governing elders and ministers is called a *session.* Presbyteries are groups of churches; synods are groups of presbyteries; and the General

Assembly oversees the entire church. The first American General Assembly was held in 1789. Today, there are 21,194 ordained ministers and 101,324 elders in 16 regional synods and 173 presbyteries. As early as 1930, women were ordained as elders in one of the churches, which eventually united with the present-day Church. By 1956, women were ordained as ministers. When the factions finally united, women had long been accepted into the ministry. Today, 29 percent of active Presbyterian ministers are women.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) is active in worldwide evangelization and spent $125 million on national and international mission work. In the United States, there are 11 Presbyterian Church seminaries, 7 secondary schools, and more than 65 colleges and universities related to the Church. Yet even as the work of the Church progresses, its membership fell 12.5 percent between 1994 and 2004. The average size of a Presbyterian congregation is 214 members; the median size is 109. Attendance at worship services averages 52 percent. Church membership is 92 percent white. Annual individual contributions to the Church averaged $936 in 2004.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) has taken stands on a number of important social issues. In regard to abortion, the Church has called for "an atmosphere of open debate and mutual respect for a variety of opinions." There was a consensus, however, that abortion should not be used merely as a birth control or gender selection option; that the health of the mother should be a mitigating circumstance at all times; that no law should limit access to abortion; and that no law should completely ban abortion. The Presbyterian Church (USA) has welcomed homosexuals into its community and decried any kind of discrimination against them but condemned homosexuality as a sin. Admitted, openly homosexual persons may not be ordained as elders, deacons, or ministers. The Church opposes capital punishment and state-sanctioned gambling, favors gun control, and is true to conflicting beliefs of its past constituent groups, supports personal decisions not to drink alcoholic beverages, but supports responsible drinking for those who do choose to drink alcohol.[45]

Lutherans

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is the seventh largest church in the United States and the largest of 21 Lutheran bodies in the country, with over 4.9 million baptized members. There are 10,585 congregations in 65 synods, which are grouped into nine regions and who are served by 17,694 clergy (3,140 of the clergy are women). Synod assemblies elect bishops. The Church membership is overwhelmingly white, its largest

group of people of color being a bit over 54,000 African Americans. The ELCA has 8 seminaries, 28 colleges and universities (4 each in Minnesota and Iowa), 16 high schools, and 210 elementary schools. Its social ministries serve 3,000 communities. Annual giving per conformed member averages about $550.

The ELCA officially began on the first day of January 1988 with the merger of the American Lutheran Church, the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, and the Lutheran Church in America. German, Dutch, and Scandinavian immigrants to America brought Lutheranism to America as early as the 1620s. Mergers or unions of Lutheran synods became the norm as originally immigrant churches gradually abandoned use of their mother tongues for English. The American Lutheran Church had been created in 1960 out of the merger of German, Danish, and Norwegian groups. The Lutheran Church in America had been formed by the merger of German, Slovak, Icelandic, Swedish, Finnish, and Danish synods in 1962.

The ELCA takes a wide view of what *church* means: it is the fellowship of all those who have returned to God through Jesus Christ, no matter the denomination. The Church has retained the use of the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian (Trinitarian) Creed. The ELCA recognizes baptism in other Christian churches. Those who are already baptized may join the Church merely by going to a membership meeting at a local church. As its history of unions intimates, the ELCA is open to and active in ecumenical discussions, but it retains its Lutheran heritage. The Church believes in Martin Luther's three *solas:* salvation by the grace of God alone, salvation through faith alone, and the Bible as the sole norm of doctrine and living. However, the ELCA recognizes differing biblical interpretation. Thus, while the Bible is the authority in faith and practice, it is not necessarily accurate in historical or scientific matters.

The ELCA is active in social advocacy and encourages its members to be engaged in these issues. The Church has spoken out, among other things, for peace, arms control, human rights, corporate responsibility, proper care of creation, access to health care and decent and affordable housing, and the banning of assault weapons. It has opposed capital punishment, repeal of the federal tax on estates (the so-called death tax), and expressed the need to address hunger, poverty, racism, and immigration issues humanely. The ELCA has also recognized that government has a legitimate role in regulating abortion, but it has opposed laws that would deny access to safe and affordable justified abortions. While contraception is the best way to prevent unwanted pregnancies, the Church has taken the position that abortion can be justified and morally responsible if the mother's life is in danger, in cases of rape or incest, if conception takes place in dehumanizing circumstances,

or if there is a fetal abnormality. Abortion can never be justified, however, if the fetus can survive separated from the mother.[46]

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

The Missouri Synod originated with German Lutherans who immigrated to Missouri in 1839 and formed a synod that first met in 1847. It is the second largest Lutheran body in the United States, with over 2.5 million members, but its numbers have been in decline for 30 years. In 2003, the Synod counted 6,160 congregations with 5,281 pastors among them. Congregation members gave $1.25 billion to their congregations.[47] Of the congregations, 2,526 operate schools or early childhood centers, and associations of congregations operate another 183. For the 2004–2005 year, 143,322 children were enrolled in 1,028 elementary schools and 19,638 in 101 high schools.[48] The Synod, divided into 35 districts and some 600 circuits, also has 10 colleges and 2 seminaries. Synodal Conventions, the Synod's highest governing body, are held every three years. Convention members, one lay person and one pastor, are elected from all the electoral circuits to vote on proposals before the body.

The Missouri Synod sets itself apart from the ELCA in a number of respects, although both retain basic Lutheran theology and the faith of the three creeds. Perhaps most significantly, the Missouri Synod has not been transformed by large mergers. In fact, the Synod has taken the position that ecumenical or merger discussions are without value and even contrary to God's will, unless all parties share the same interpretation of the Bible. (In 1932, the Synod found that the Pope was the fulfillment of the Antichrist of biblical prophesy.)[49] The Missouri Synod holds that the Bible is inerrant in all cases, including science and history, unlike the ELCA. Neither does the Missouri Synod ordain women to the clergy for scriptural reasons.[50]

The Missouri Synod has found no biblical prohibition of capital punishment, contraception, or alcohol, but it has condemned abortion as a sin, except in rare circumstances that the mother's life is in danger, and euthanasia. Likewise, the Synod has opposed human cloning that may destroy embryos. It has also declared racism sinful and homosexuality as "intrinsically sinful," but the Synod has reached out to minister to lesbians and gays.[51]

Assemblies of God

The Assemblies of God (USA), with headquarters in Springfield, Missouri, is the 10th largest denomination in the United States, with over 12,200 churches and around 2.7 million constituents. Of the churches, 8,640 are characterized as white; 2,092 as Hispanic; 471 as Asian/Pacific Islander; and 269 as African American. Both men and women may be ordained into the

ministry, but males outnumber females almost five to one.[52] The Assemblies of God is the largest group to believe in speaking in tongues, a phenomenon that occurs, its adherents claim, when people are baptized in the Holy Spirit. This Pentecostal church traces its origin to the revivalism that swept the United States at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, and more specifically to a prayer meeting in Topeka, Kansas, on January 1, 1901. The Pentecostal movement spread to California from Kansas, Missouri, and Texas. At the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, a three-year revival meeting helped to put Pentecostalism on the map, and in 1914, a group of preachers and lay people met in Arkansas to discuss forming a fellowship of spirit-baptized believers. Enthusiastic religion characterized by speaking in tongues was anathema to mainline Protestant churches as well as Fundamentalists and most evangelical churches. The General Council of the Assemblies of God was formed to unite the individual churches, which would remain self-governing, and further their beliefs. In 1916, the council approved a Statement of Fundamental Truths.

Recognizing the Trinity and the scriptures as divinely inspired, the Fundamental Truths declare belief in the humanity and divinity of Jesus Christ and mankind's willing sin, which ushered in evil and physical and spiritual death. There are four cardinal doctrines: that salvation will restore fellowship with God to all who accept Christ's offer for forgiveness; that baptism, which follows salvation, empowers people for witnessing and service; that divine healing of the sick is a privilege made available to Christians by Christ's death; and that Jesus Christ will rapture his church before he comes again to rule the earth for 1,000 years. The unrepentant will spend eternity in a lake of fire. In addition, the members of the Assemblies of God, who, like the members of many other Protestant denominations, recognize the ordinances of water baptism and Holy Communion, believe that speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit and that their salvation requires them to evangelize the world.

Today, the Assemblies of God church operates 19 Bible and liberal arts colleges and a seminary in the United States. The Assemblies' emphasis on world evangelization, however, has created a denomination, originally American, that has more adherents outside the United States than inside it. The church counts 236,022 churches in 191 countries, with 1,891 international Bible schools and 48 million overseas members. The Assemblies of God has taken positions on a number of issues. True believers cannot be possessed by demons because the devil is to them an external force that must be fought. Abortion and euthanasia violate the sanctity of human life. Alcohol, even in moderation, is "providing Satan an opening." Because the Bible identifies God as the creator, evolution is not possible.[53]

The Episcopal Church

What was originally the Church of England, the Episcopal Church came to America with English colonists and became established as the church of high society. With the end of the American Revolution, it adopted the name Protestant Episcopal Church in 1783 and, in 1967, the Episcopal Church. During the last half of the nineteenth century, the Church expanded beyond its colonial roots on the Atlantic coast and spread through the country. Since the 1950s, however, membership has dwindled to 2.46 million.[54] The Episcopal Church, a member of the Anglican Union, has 7,200 parishes and missions and 17,209 clergy. There are nine Episcopalian colleges in the United States.[55] A presiding bishop is elected every nine years and presides over the House of Bishops. A General Convention is held every three years, in which deputations from dioceses and the House of Bishops make policy and worship decisions.[56]

Some 72 million Anglicans around the world are united in the use of the *Book of Common Prayer,* which blends the twin traditions of Anglicanism in the Reformation and Roman Catholicism. Styles of worship may differ significantly from one church to another, but liturgies through the *Book of Common Prayer* share a common feel. Baptism and the Holy Eucharist are recognized as sacraments. The other sacraments recognized by Roman Catholics—confirmation, ordination, matrimony, reconciliation, and unction—are considered means of grace, but not necessary. Episcopalians have insisted that worship be held in native languages, and they believe that the Bible should be interpreted in light of tradition and reason. In order words, historical criticism of the Bible may lead to new understandings; the Bible is not inerrant in all respects.

The Episcopal Church has long been active in promoting social justice and peace through direct action and advocacy. Through its ministries, the Church has worked against racism, for the protection of the environment, for peace in the Middle East, and for criminal justice. It has reached out to victims of AIDS. The Episcopal Church has passed official resolutions opposing the preemptive use of nuclear weapons, the infringement of the rights of minorities and immigrants, and the unilateral invasion of Iraq. It has supported nuclear disarmament, international debt relief, poverty programs, respect for religious diversity, and the millennium development goals of the United Nations.[57]

The openness of the Episcopal Church to ecumenism—any baptized person may receive communion (the Eucharist) in an Episcopal Church—and to new biblical interpretations can lead the Church in new directions. In 1976, the Church's General Convention approved the ordination of women into

the priesthood, which meant that women could become bishops. By 2005, there were 2,033 active and employed ordained women priests and 1,329 deacons. Since 1989, 12 women have been ordained as bishops. Ordaining women was one thing, but the ordination of homosexuals would prove another. In 1979, the General Convention disapproved of ordaining homosexuals, yet a bishop went on and did so in 1989 with no final consequence. In 2003, an overtly practicing gay man was ordained bishop of the diocese of New Hampshire and affirmed by the General Convention. This would have consequences that are still to be played out in full.

Even before the ordination of the gay bishop, schism was fomenting. In 1996, dissidents formed the American Anglican Council with the goal of "proclaiming the Biblical and orthodox faith" by advocating for and providing assistance to those who want to remain Anglicans but disagree with the progressive religion that, they aver, is being preached by the Episcopal Church. The council claims that the real issue is not homosexuality, blessing homosexual unions, or even the ordaining of homosexuals, although its literature repeatedly returns to those subjects, but rather an understanding of Jesus Christ and revisionist interpretations of the Bible. The acceptance of pluralism by these revisionists has made every religion the same, thereby denying biblical truth and giving birth to an "anything is OK" theology and lifestyle. This has all led, of course, to a dissolute Episcopalian youth. The council points to a study that found that only 70 percent of young Episcopalians believe in God; 40 percent find faith important in their daily lives; 60 percent think morality is relative; and 45 percent think adults are hypocrites. Early in 2004, a movement called the Anglican Communion Network was created. Its plan is to become the new biblically based American Anglican church recognized by the Anglican Union, thus leaving the Episcopal Church in schism. In fact, 22 of the 38 provinces in the Anglican Union have declared the Episcopal Church in broken union.[58] Local Episcopal churches around the country have been divided. Some have left the Episcopal Church and, calling themselves Anglicans, rather than Episcopalians, allied themselves with conservative African bishops who welcome their orthodoxy and their intention to remain in the Anglican Union.

Churches of Christ

The Churches of Christ, with 1.5 million members in the United States, emerged out of America's Second Great Awakening, which commenced at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and the so-called Restoration movement that resulted. While its greatest numbers of American members are in the South, particularly in Texas, Tennessee, Alabama, and Arkansas, there are

Churches of Christ in all 50 states and in 109 other nations. Worldwide, the Churches of Christ claims 2.5–3 million adherents in 20,000 congregations.

The message of the Restoration movement was that Christ's true church needed to be restored to its original foundation: a church based not on denominational doctrine, but on simple Christianity; a church based squarely on the Bible and only the Bible; a church that promoted the practices of simple New Testament Christianity. Thus the Churches of Christ is not a denomination, but a group of independent, self-governing churches that may coordinate some social works but has no trappings of denomination such as governing boards, annual conventions, or publications. The congregations of the Churches of Christ believe their church is Christ's church.

Becoming a Christian through hearing the Gospel, repenting, accepting Christ, and baptism by immersion makes a person a member of the church. The Churches of Christ believe that faith can come to anyone through listening to the word of the Lord; there is no such thing as God's having predestined people to heaven or hell. The task of the church is to teach the New Testament "without modification" to lead people to Christ. The creed of the Churches of Christ is the New Testament. The individual churches elect elders from their male membership to govern themselves. They also select deacons. Worship is centered on the practices of the first-century church: "singing, praying, preaching, giving, and eating the Lord's Supper." Some congregations, the so-called noninstrumental churches, employ no musical instruments in the singing because the New Testament makes no mention of instruments in liturgical worship. The Lord's Supper is observed each Sunday.[59]

Jehovah's Witnesses

Jehovah's Witnesses grew out of a Bible study group in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, led by Charles Taze Russell. In 1879, the first issue of *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence* was published, and two years later, the Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society was formed, which later took its current name, the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. The members of the society adopted the name Jehovah's Witnesses in 1931.

Most American households have been visited at least once by the Witnesses' home missionaries, dressed in plain black pants and white shirts. They go door to door through neighborhoods to distribute the society's tracts and publications with the hope of interesting people in Bible study with them. This particular technique brought the Witnesses to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled in their favor. The Witnesses have no clergy class or special titles. Their magazines *The Watch Tower* and *Awake!* continue to be primary communication tools, but the Witnesses have also made extensive use of newspaper,

radio, and television to evangelize. While they now claim some 90,000 congregations worldwide, it is estimated there are about 1.8 million Jehovah's Witnesses in the United States.

Jehovah, the Witnesses' name for God, had a purpose in all created things. God's creation reflects God's glory, and God created the earth so it could be inhabited, the sin of Adam and Eve notwithstanding. The act of creation precludes any belief in human evolution. Witnesses believe that souls die with physical death, but through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, they will be resurrected. (Contrary to popular thinking, Jehovah's Witnesses are Christians, who believe Christ is the son of God, but inferior to him.) Witnesses believe further that the end of the world as we know it is near, and Christ, who rose from the dead "as an immortal spirit person," will rule the earth in an ideal, peaceful, and righteous kingdom. Because God created the earth with a purpose, the earth will not be destroyed or depopulated, but the "wicked will be eternally destroyed," and those who God approves will live forever. Death, the punishment for original sin, will be no longer. However, only 144,000, a number biblically wrought, who are born again will "go to heaven and rule with Christ."

Clearly Witnesses believe that the Bible is "God's Word and is truth." Good Witnesses are expected to pray only to Jehovah through Christ, use no images in worship, keep separate from the world and avoid ecumenical movements, and obey laws that do not conflict with God's laws. They are also expected to act in a biblically moral way, serve God through the example set by Christ, and publicly testify to biblical truth. Baptism by complete immersion is considered a symbol of dedication. Perhaps the Witnesses' most controversial belief, rendered from scripture, is that "taking blood into body through mouth or veins violates God's laws." A good Jehovah's Witness would not receive a transfusion of another person's blood.[60]

Judaism

Eighty-five percent of the 5.2 million Jews in the U.S. population were born in the United States. Of those born outside the United States, 44 percent migrated from the former Soviet Union. The Jewish population is not uniformly located around the country. Some 43 percent live in the Northeast, 22 percent in the South, 22 percent in the West, and only 13 percent in the Midwest. Jewish adults are generally better educated (55% have at least bachelor's degrees vs. 28% in the total population) and have a higher median annual household income ($50,000 vs. $42,000 in the total population) than the general population. Still, 19 percent of Jewish households classify as low income ($25,000 a year or less). Thirty-five percent of American Jews identify themselves as Reform; 26 percent as Conservative; 20 percent secular

(not attending temple or synagogue); 10% orthodox (containing many sects); and 9 percent all other.[61]

As non-Christians in a Christian country, Jews in the United States have been subjected to discrimination and prejudice. Anti-Semitism has long been a feature of right-wing American nativism and has reared its head in the White House (President Richard Nixon and evangelist Billy Graham on tape in 1972 agreeing that Jews have a stranglehold on media), among business leaders (Henry Ford was openly anti-Semitic), in the media (Father Charles Coughlin, Catholic priest and radio personality of the 1930s and 1940s, was finally suppressed for his rabid anti-Jewish views), and in presidential and state elections (David Duke, former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, ran for various offices). The truth is that these cultural representatives gave voice to a common and persistent American prejudice against Jews based on the old Shylock stereotype.

Just as religious freedom in America opened Christianity, particularly Protestantism, to a tremendous diversity of theological and religious beliefs and practices, Judaism, too, was transformed by the American experience. In 1885, a group of rabbis meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, declared the principles that would govern Reform Judaism, the movement they were undertaking. Recognizing the so-called God-idea as a central truth, the Bible as "the most potent instrument of religious and moral instruction," the rabbis went on to discard Mosaic Law other than moral law because it did not speak to modern times. Likewise, they discarded orthodox dietary laws, priestly purity, and traditional dress. Reform Judaism would be "no longer a nation, but a religious community." They wanted Judaism to be "a "progressive religion" that made every attempt to be in accord with reason as it strove for truth, justice, and peace. Reform Jews would be duty bound to involvement in social issues and reach out beyond Judaism to welcome converts.[62] Reform Judaism, which affirmed its commitment to the equality of men and women by ordaining women as rabbis and investing women cantors and welcoming gays and homosexuals into Jewish life, is now the largest Jewish movement in the United States, with 1.5 million members and over 900 congregations. The Central Conference of American Rabbis has been active since its inception in 1889 in adopting hundreds of resolutions on social issues, including civil and minority rights, discrimination, and world peace. The Conference stands for a woman's right to choose abortion but is against abortion on demand as well as any legal restrictions on abortion. It has supported gay and lesbian civil marriage and the rights of homosexual rabbis to fulfill their vocations.

In reaction to the modernizing tendencies of Reform Judaism, the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism was founded in 1913. Now with 760 affiliated synagogues in North America, the Conservative movement has tried

A boy reading the Torah during his bar mitzvah. Corbis.

to steer a midway between Reform and orthodoxy by maintaining historical continuity with Jewish tradition. This includes, among other things, observing biblical dietary restrictions, loyalty to the Torah, and using Hebrew as the language of worship.[63]

Islam

The number of Muslims in the United States is the subject of some debate. Estimates vary from around 1 million to 6.5 million. The best guess is that there are a bit fewer than 2 million, more than half of whom were born in the United States to immigrant families, some as long as three generations ago.[64] Turmoil at home brought Muslim immigrants to America: the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, the aftermath of World Wars I and II, civil war in Lebanon, and revolution in Iran. Changes in U.S. immigration policy brought new waves of Muslims to America from Africa and Asia. What is known is that there are 1,209 mosques in the United States, and 62 percent of them were founded after 1980. California has 227 mosques, New York has 140, and New Jersey has 86, but there are mosques spread across the country. America's oldest mosque is located in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. While only 7 percent of mosques are attended by a single ethnic group, many began as ethnic

places of worship. A third of them were South Asian in origin; 30 percent, African American; and 25 percent, Arab. Only 1.6 percent were white American. Over 20 percent of the mosques operate full-time schools. Some 71 percent of American Muslims believe that the Koran should be interpreted in light of modern experience, and 70 percent believe strongly that they should be involved participants in American institutions and democracy.[65]

Muslims, like Jews, have been misunderstood and ostracized as non-Christians in the United States. There is a strange confusion in American culture that all Muslims, save for indigenous African American Muslims, are Arabs, which, of course, is not true. In part because of a lack of knowledge about Islam, Americans tend to make Muslims victims of stereotyping, and some conflate the radical Islam of terrorists with mainline Islam. The stereotype is an Arab Muslim, derisively referred to as a rag head. This stereotype melds the Sunnis, Shi'ites, and all other varieties and nationalities of Muslims in America into the mistaken single category of "Arabs." Hate crimes against Arabs, whether Muslims or not, rose after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, D.C. Yet American Muslims, like American Jews, have assimilated well into American life and adopted American lifestyles. The have found that Islam is in no way at odds with American culture and democracy.

The Nation of Islam

The Nation of Islam (NOI), sometimes referred to as the black Muslims, publishes no membership numbers, but is believed to have between 50,000 and 100,000 members. While its numbers may be small, its influence is not. Minister Louis Farrakhan, leader of the NOI, has quite remarkably been the force behind the Million Man March on Washington, D.C., in 1995 and the Million Family March in 2000, also in Washington. With these marches, Farrakhan wanted to establish positive public images of African Americans and demonstrate the principles of atonement, reconciliation, and responsibility in the search for black empowerment and family stability.

Farrakhan, a fiery speaker given to controversy, resurrected the teachings of Wallace D. Fard (Wallace Fard Muhammad). Fard disdained white men's religion—Christianity—started a mosque in 1930 in Detroit, Michigan; and claimed his mission in life was to lead the original members of the tribe of Shabazz from the lost nation of Asia, who had been captured and placed into slavery in America, down the road of independence into a higher civilization. Elijah Muhammad, to whom Fard revealed himself as the Mahdi, or messiah of Islam, ruled the NOI from 1935 until his death in 1975. During his rule, civil rights figure Malcolm X joined the NOI but left to form his own group. Elijah Muhammad's son took over NOI leadership in 1975, abandoned the

Minister Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam religion is known for his charisma and passionate speeches. © AP Photo/Carlos Osorio.

doctrine that Fard was the long-expected Mahdi, and eventually took his movement back into traditional Islam. In 1978, Farrakhan reestablished the NOI and the traditions of Fard and Elijah Muhammad.

The NOI claims to have mosques and study groups in 120 cities in the United States, Europe, and the Caribbean. It also has missions in South Africa and Ghana. The members of NOI believe in one God, Allah; in the Koran; in the writings of all God's prophets; and in the truth of the Bible. The Bible, however, has been tampered with and filled with untruths. It is thus in need of new interpretation. They believe that judgment will come, but not in the resurrection of the dead; rather, it will come in mental resurrection, and Allah's chosen people will be resurrected first. NOI members believe in justice for all and in equality, but equality is not possible between slave masters and freed slaves. Integration is a deception. Thus African Americans and whites need to be separated, and African Americans need to identify themselves with names that do not recall their former masters' names. The NOI stands firmly against its members' participation in war as good Muslims, noting that Muslims should not be forced to fight in America's wars because they have nothing for which to fight.

The NOI has a concerted social program based on its religious beliefs. The Muslim Program calls for freedom, equal justice, and equality of opportunity.

Descendants of former slaves should be allowed to establish their own separate state or territory in North America or elsewhere, and the former masters should underwrite that state or territory for up to 25 years or until self-sufficiency can be established. African Americans should be able to vote on whether they want to go to the separated state or remain where they are. Muslims in federal prisons and African American men and women sentenced to death should be freed from prison. Police brutality and mob attacks against African Americans must end, and African Americans need the protection of courts. African Americans should not have to live in poor housing conditions or be dependent on charity. African Americans should be exempt from all taxation. Muslims want an educational system that is equal, with boys and girls separated, and African American pupils should have African American teachers. Finally, the NOI calls for the prohibition of race mixing through intermarriage.

The Nation of Islam also calls itself the Nation of Peace and the fulfillment of the Old Testament promise to free the enslaved. NOI members do not carry firearms; the Brotherhood of Islam precludes aggression. Black Muslims acknowledge their respect for the laws of the United States. They believe in respect for others, good manners, and clean living. They forsake alcohol, smoking, or the abuse of any substance that would prohibit a healthy lifestyle. They dress modestly. Farrakhan's incendiary rhetoric, replete with the bombastic delivery of occasionally outrageous opinion, however, does not lend the NOI the image of peacefulness. Indeed, its message of hope for the descendants of black slaves—a separate state made up exclusively of blacks—runs against the prevailing American efforts toward total integration of all peoples into the fabric of American society. Progressive Americans want to be color-blind, and the laws passed during and after the civil rights movement of the 1960s guarantee, as much as laws can, that at least before the law, race may never be the basis of any kind of discrimination.[66]

Itinerant Preachers, Televangelists, and Nondenominational Churches

There is no accurate count of how many local churches or houses of worship there are in the United States. Anyone can start a church anywhere, and there is no need for it to be allied with a religious denomination. Freedom of religion and free speech provide a superior foundation for a variety of religious expression.

Itinerant preachers have been important players in American history and culture. They are responsible for the waves of evangelical awakenings that have periodically ripped through America since the 1730s and continue until today. They are the ones who once pitched their revival tents and preached

the Bible to all who would listen. They converted slaves to Christianity in the South and spread an enthusiastic religion of the heart throughout the land. Some were charlatans who found personal uses for the collection offerings. Most were God-fearing men on a mission.

Revivals remain part of American life, but they now are more likely to take place in sports stadiums than in tents. The Reverend Billy Graham has been America's most admired itinerant preacher since he emerged out of the Youth for Christ movement in the 1940s. He set up the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association to keep him free of any hint of financial scandal. He used media effectively, first through a weekly radio show, "The Hour of Decision," which was also televised in the early 1950s, and then through tapes, magazines, books, and films. Most Americans know him, however, as the preacher who set up so-called crusades in cities all over the world, many of which were televised, to evangelize the globe with the simple biblical message that repentance and acceptance of Christ into your heart will bring eternal salvation. Graham ingratiated himself with U.S. presidents after his first attempt with Harry Truman failed. Whenever a president after Truman was in some kind of crisis, Graham seemed to be invited to the White House. Presidents knew that in the public mind, association with Graham gave a kind of blessing and assurance that everything was right with God.

Although Graham was very much a feature of the Cold War, as he patriotically stood up for American, Christian values against the godlessness of Communism, he favored reconciliation, rather than confrontation. He rejected the agenda of the Religious Right for active political involvement, but Graham remains a recognized leader of evangelical Protestant Christianity.[67]

Itinerant preachers do not have to pitch tents to preach anymore; they can buy a television station. That is what Pat Robertson did in 1960 when he purchased a little station in Virginia and called his operation the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN). This was the birth of Christian television broadcasting in the United States. In 1977, Robertson founded CBN University, now called Regents University. CBN now claims to provide Christian programming by cable and satellite to around 200 countries. A prayer line is open all day and night. *The 700 Club,* a show featuring Robertson's Christian commentary on news issues, has been on the air since 1966.[68] Never far from controversy, in 2002, he called Islam an unpeaceful religion bent on domination and destruction. In 2003, he suggested that a nuclear device should be used to obliterate the U.S. Department of State. He made apologies in 2005 for saying that Hugo Chavez, the president of Venezuela, should be assassinated and for his prophecy of death and destruction for the town of Dover, Pennsylvania, where creationist members of a school board were thrown out and replaced with proevolution advocates. In 2006, Robertson

again made an apology, this time to Ariel Sharon's son, for saying that the former Israeli premier's cerebral hemorrhage was God's retribution for his division of Israel.

Evangelists Paul and Jan Crouch founded the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) in 1973. TBN advertises itself as "the world's largest Christian television network," reaching every major continent through 47 satellites and 12,460 television and cable affiliates. In the United States, TBN is also the largest religious network, with 6,459 cable affiliates, 67.7 million cable and satellite subscribers, and 420 affiliated broadcast stations. TBN reaches over 92 million American households. According to TBN, its viewers tune in because they possess the core values of "faith in God," "love of family," and "patriotic pride." These are the values "that have been attacked and ridiculed by our pop culture and news and entertainment media." TBN produces original Christian programming and even live coverage of Christian events. There are channels for children ("completely free of the violence and crude humor" found elsewhere and containing the "best moral and Biblical teachings"), youths, and TBN Enlace USA for the Hispanic community. The Crouches have a Christian chat show, *Praise the Lord,* on which guests share their faith.[69]

TBN viewers can also watch church services on the Church Channel and experience God's healing powers on the Healing Channel. Some evangelists appear regularly on their own shows. Dr. Jack Van Impe, convinced by Bible prophecy that the Second Coming of Christ is immanent, has charted out the future in a prophecy chart and even produced a Middle East invasion map so believers can follow what the Bible says will happen soon. Charismatics Kenneth and Gloria Copeland offer Bible-based financial advice. Even better, evangelists Marilyn Hickey and her daughter Sarah Bowling have a Miracle Provision afghan with all the various names of God, which, for an offering of $149 or more, they have anointed so that it will bring the recipient a miraculous cure of financial problems. Benny Hinn heals the sick by his anointings and may speak in tongues. Dr. Kreflo A. Dollar preaches and lives the gospel of prosperity. Charismatic author and televangelist Joyce Meyer wants to pray and take action against all the ungodliness that has crept into American life.[70] Televangelism helps keeps religion in the public domain at all times. Channel surfers cannot click their remote controls fast enough to miss a religion program with an evangelical message. Religious television programming is part of most cable and satellite packages.

Most itinerant preachers are not concerned with religious denomination; they are concerned with personal salvation. No nondenominational church could be more emblematic of the growth of all-American Evangelical Protestantism than the Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, which is

located in suburban, Republican south Orange County. Pastor Rick Warren and his wife arrived there in 1979 knowing no one and determined to start a church. From humble beginnings, Saddleback is now a megachurch with more than 20,000 members. Warren claims that 80,000 names are on the rolls. Warren is a pastoral Horatio Alger, pull yourself up by your own bootstraps story. His 1995 book *The Purpose Driven Church* focused on five biblical purposes that led to his church's success: worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and evangelism. His later best-selling book *The Purpose-Driven Life* took this message to a personal level and is used as a devotional, self-improvement text for the small worship and study groups that propel the church's mission forward. Perhaps Warren's greatest insight into American evangelicalism is that conversion must remain an intensely personal phenomenon. Going to church on the weekend is not conversion—worship and fellowship follow conversion.[71]

The beliefs espoused at the nondenominational Saddleback Church are straightforward. There is one triune God. Sin is an attitude that separates God from mankind. Heaven and hell are eternally real. Jesus Christ suffered and died for the sins of mankind and arose from the dead. No amount of self-improvement or good works can save a person because salvation is a gift from

Pastor Rick Warren, author of *The Purpose-Driven Life,* sits in his mega-church in Saddleback, California. © AP Photo/Chris Carlson.

God that comes with faith in Jesus Christ, and salvation is maintained by grace, not by any special human effort. The Holy Spirit guides good Christians through life, just as the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible, the supreme source of unerring truth.[72]

This kind of unvarnished theology—God, sin, personal salvation, heaven—appeals to many Americans' sense of individual power and supremacy, whether before the law, before God, or within society. It is in stark contrast to religions like Roman Catholicism, Judaism, and Islam, which emphasize the good of the faith community over any one individual and have layers of complicated theological traditions. Yet the middle-of-the-road evangelicalism of the Saddleback Church is not simply that old-time religion. Contrary to evangelical tradition, the members of Saddleback give generously to and become involved in social causes, from AIDS to assistance for tsunami victims. The church has some 200 ministries.

The old stereotype of an evangelical worship service as dull Bible-thumping fire and brimstone sermonizing, as depicted in Hollywood films, does not exist at the Saddleback megachurch. In fact, the church has developed venues for various tastes in worship. The main service has a full band. The Praise venue features a gospel choir. The OverDrive venue has rock 'n' roll. El Encuentro features music in Spanish. The Traditions venue has favorite old songs and hymns, along with a videocast on a large screen. The Ohana venue presents island music with "hospitality and hugs," and members can learn worship "through signing or hula." The Elevation venue is for singles and has live music. The Country venue is "country music, boots, and buckles" with a message—line dancing follows the service.[73]

Other Religious Thought in America

Two religious groups not native to America have maintained a strong and constant voice for peace. Mennonites, who came out of the Anabaptist tradition in Europe and were persecuted there for their beliefs, found a safe home in America in the late seventeenth century. Although Mennonite groups, whose core population remains in Pennsylvania and spread westward to Missouri, differ on various doctrinal issues, they strive to be Christ-centered in every aspect of their lives, accept the Bible as inspired by God, and baptize only adults who have declared their faith in Jesus Christ. Most significantly from a cultural viewpoint, many of the 320,000 Mennonites in America have been active in protesting military objectives, objecting to defense budgets, and supporting conscientious objectors to military service.[74] The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), who number only about 93,000 in the United States, has likewise been influential in protesting war and furthering peace movements.

An Amish farmer working on his farm with his horse-drawn plow. Corbis.

The Amish, who number around 128,000, share the Anabaptist traditions and beliefs in baptism and peace. Amish do not serve in the military. The Amish, however, choose to have no voice in national affairs, preferring to separate themselves from the modern world. The Amish have spread out from Pennsylvania to Ohio, to Indiana, and to some small degree westward from there. The Old Order Amish continue to speak a dialect of Swiss-intonated German found nowhere else because their language has developed in a closed community. Agrarian communities, the Amish elect their own religious leaders. They have no churches; they meet in homes. Local congregations make determinations on how they will relate to the modern world. Some congregations, for example, may permit an outer layer of rubber on a buggy wheel; others may not. The strictest of them dress plainly, use no electricity, do not own automobiles, and forego the frills of curtains on windows of their homes. It is a strange irony that tourists beg Amish for photographs of them standing next to their horses and buggies, not understanding that the Amish consider photographs graven images.

Old traditions of Christianity could be protected in America, but American creativity could also take Christianity into new territory. In the first part of the twentieth century, snake handling began showing up in Appalachia at the Church of God with Signs Following. There are at most about 2,000

members of this Pentecostal, literally interpreted Bible-based church, who believe that once filled with the Holy Spirit after repentance, salvation, and leading a Christian life, they can follow the signs. The signs may include serpent handling as well as drinking poison and casting out demons.[75]

The Unitarian Universalist Association, which claims about 158,000 members, has taken a different tack. Formed in 1961, Unitarians and Universalists believe that a modern understanding of human nature and Jesus Christ combined with the knowledge that a good God wants salvation for everyone means that anyone, believers of any faith and atheists alike, should be welcomed into the church. Unitarian universalism is fundamentally based on humanism. Proud of its historically liberal views, the association has worked to operationalize the feminist agenda in the church; stood for rights for gays, lesbians, and bisexuals; and ordained gay and lesbian clergy.[76]

The Church of Christ, Scientist, was the creation of Mary Baker Eddy in 1879. In her 1875 book *Science and Health with Key to the Scripture,* she claimed to have discovered the predictable and reproducible science of Jesus Christ's healing power. The Bible and Eddy's book are the twin foundations of the Church's beliefs. Christian Science reading rooms dot the country and the world, where people can go to understand this science of religion. With no ordained clergy, Baker hoped to restore the primitive Christian church and a better world based on a fuller understanding of God.[77]

Religion and Politics

While it may have been true at one time that religious beliefs could be equated with certain political beliefs, this certainly is no longer the case. A broad spectrum of sociopolitical and moral opinion has developed even within individual denominations. On the hot-button issues of abortion and gay rights, for example, there is clear division. Where there is some coalition of values, however, is across denominational lines. Those who consider themselves religious conservatives no matter the denomination might agree that abortion should be outlawed and gay rights should not be recognized, whereas those who consider themselves moderates or liberals may not.[78]

Fifty-one percent of Americans believe that churches should speak out on social and political issues against 44 percent who think they should not. Among white evangelicals and African American Protestants, however, 67 percent favor churches taking such positions. Forty-five percent of the population finds that conservative Christians have exceeded an acceptable boundary in attempting to impose their beliefs on the country, but an equal percentage say they have not. Thirty-nine percent of Americans think political leaders do not speak enough about their religious convictions, but 26 percent think they

express them too much. A solid 66 percent of all Americans support government funding to churches for social services. Only 33 percent oppose it.[79] Clearly Americans are divided on the role of religion in public society and politics, even though they appreciate the good works performed by churches through their charitable activities. Indeed, many Americans hold their personal religious views closely and would not consider imposing their beliefs on anyone else. To some Americans, however, the kingdom of God is at hand, and America is not prepared.

The so-called new Religious Right is a multidenominational (and nondenominational) group of like-minded traditionalists. They have banded together to push a political agenda of so-called old-fashioned American values and overturn what they see as a secular, Godless social movement that is ruining American culture. The Religious Right is overtly political, allied with and energized by the Republican Party, and has sought to interpret American history as well as foresee America's future in terms of biblical prophecy. Patriotism (called *nationalism* when applied to other nations) must, therefore, be part and parcel of the believers' arsenal. These traditionalists have, then, both the patriotic and the moral duty to act against perceived transgressions against traditional American values and beliefs. These efforts take many turns. When a large corporation was found to have advertised its products in a gay magazine, an instant boycott of all the corporation's products was announced. The corporation's first reaction was to pull the ads, but it finally went ahead with them. When President George W. Bush's Christmas card favored the inclusive phrase *Happy Holidays,* rather than *Merry Christmas,* he was accused of taking God out of Christmas.

Through the efforts of the Religious Right, America is the only Western nation where the teaching of evolution is contested. Right-wing religious groups have, in some cases, taken over public school boards to press for the concomitant teaching of the theory of intelligent design. Scientists contend that this is no theory at all, for it has no scientific basis; rather, it is another way for conservative religious people to teach the biblical creation story in public schools. The frustration of the Religious Right is understandable. Series of lawsuits have taken God out of the schools in the effort to maintain religious freedom defined as church-state separation. Religion may not be taught in the schools, and even the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag, which declares "one nation, under God," is considered a violation of the separation principle. To the Religious Right, whose universe of truth is the Bible, religion and public life cannot be separated. How can they be asked to violate their beliefs by sending their children to a Godless public school? The more important question, however, is how a pluralistic American society will deal with a crusading religious movement with a political agenda.

There may be a clue in the debate over evolution. Seventy-eight percent of Americans believe life on earth to be God's creation. Forty-eight percent believe life has evolved, but 42 percent think God created it as now found from the beginning of time. Curiously, however, 64 percent of Americans believe intelligent design (creationism) should be taught alongside with evolution. Even 32 percent of creationists agreed.[80] This would seem to indicate the desire of a majority of Americans to avoid conflict and end the debate with a good business-type negotiation that is inclusive, rather than divisive. This is the pragmatic way Americans solve problems.

Fundamentalists are frequently portrayed as hotheaded lunatics spurting out Bible verses while banging on the Good Book. In real everyday life, this is not so. There is a certain innocence and honesty to all of this. When a good Christian teacher at a small public school in a tiny Tennessee mountain town asked a Jewish woman if her daughter could play Mary in the Christmas pageant since Mary was Jewish, too, she clearly betrayed a complete lack of understanding of the pluralistic society America has become. She did not and could not understand what it meant to be Jewish or why it might be difficult for a little Jewish girl to go to temple as the mother of Jesus Christ. Americans like this well-intended teacher are not unusual in this predominantly Christian nation.

The Social Role of Churches

Churches play a vital role in American society. They are woven into the fabric of service organizations that tend to special social needs. Frequently referred to as faith-based communities, perhaps in an attempt to discharge the use of more obvious religious language that would openly test the church-state relationship, churches are very much involved in medical care through hospitals, education from the youngest age through graduate school, and the promotion of social justice through charitable activities.

Catholic Charities, for example, traces its beginnings to New Orleans in 1727, when an order of nuns opened an orphanage. Today, it serves over 7 million people with annual resources of nearly $3 billion, 60 percent of which is derived from government. Catholic Charities employs around 50,000 staff members and coordinates the work of nearly 200,000 volunteers through 137 agencies and their 1,341 branches and affiliates. More than 4.5 million people benefit from its food service operations, which include food banks, soup kitchens, and home-delivered meals. More than 3 million people, including many at-risk persons, receive social support and neighborhood services as well as health-related and educational enrichment services. Thousands more receive services designed to strengthen families, including

counseling, mental health, addiction, refugee, pregnancy, and adoption services. Catholic Charities also provides housing services, from temporary shelters and supervised living to permanent housing, and basic needs services to the poorest of the poor such as assistance with clothing, utility bills, finances, and medication.[81]

One of President George W. Bush's first acts as president was to sign Executive Order no. 13199, which established the White House Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives. The office was created to identify and eliminate any barriers that might impede faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs) from participating in federal grants and to pursue legislation to prevent discrimination against FBCOs by extending charitable choice provisions, to protect the religious freedom of the FBCOs, and to maintain the religious hiring rights of the FBCOS.[82] President Bush was named America's most influential Christian in a list of 50 owing in great part to setting up this office in 2001.[83]

There are now Centers for Faith-based and Community Initiatives in 11 federal agencies, including Homeland Security. The White House has claimed success in this venture by reporting that in the federal government's 2005 fiscal year, faith-based organizations (FBOs) received more than $2.1 billion in grants from seven government agencies and that FBOs are successfully winning more grant money in the competition for funding. From the administration's point of view, this initiative has expanded the choices of people in need. There were also legislative and judicial triumphs for the program. The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 extended the charitable choice provision (FBOs providing social services do not have to change their religious identities or hiring policies) another five years and added to new grant programs to be covered under the provision: a healthy marriages program and a responsible fatherhood program. During 2005, federal courts held that Americorps (a federally sponsored youth volunteer program) grant winners could teach religious as well as secular subjects in religiously affiliated schools and that funding for social services does not make an FBO a quasi-governmental organization, thus leaving them completely autonomous in their hiring decisions.[84]

It appears that as America experiences this new awakening of evangelical fervor, the definition of the separation of church and state is being revised. Neither the churches, which find their social works as well as some of their beliefs furthered by government funding (FBOs have received federal funds to fight HIV/AIDS through abstinence programs), nor the American people as a whole want to return to the notion of a strict separation. Americans agree that religious organizations make society a better place by aiding the less fortunate. The Religious Right had long argued that separation did not have

to make the state godless—the protector of secularism. Thus the state can advocate for putting God (churches) back into American life. What the state simply may not do, however, is regulate what anyone believes.

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3

Gender, Marriage, Family, and Education

Ellen Baier

> Feminism is the radical notion that women are human beings.
>
> —Cheris Kramerae

> [Feminism] encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians.
>
> —Rev. Pat Robertson

What could be more illustrative of American culture than how Americans live in private, love and marry, and raise their children? American life is an odd melding of liberal freedoms and social conservatism, and different regions hold entirely different viewpoints on the role of the family, of marriage, and of schools. These differences might be based on religious views, political ideologies, or personal opinions, but one thing is constant: Americans pride themselves on their independence. Anyone trying to tell an American how to live his or her life, or what to do in his or her private life, is in for quite a struggle.

Indeed, struggle is an apt word for the history of the United States, whether in public life or private, between races and genders and classes. Since the United States won its independence, and before, there were differing ideas about the best ways to pursue work, divide housework between spouses, and raise and educate children. Though there are a number of other religious traditions throughout America, the United States' history is full of Christian ideology, which informs one major side of the struggle, though not a monolithic, all-encompassing force by any means. The other side is multifaceted, full of secular humanists, liberals, feminists, and activists of all shades, occasionally

with internal divisions and opposing goals. Recently, Americans have been preoccupied with family values, which is a concept that is difficult to argue with—who is going to oppose families, after all? But defining the family, and the values, is key in understanding any American's position in the struggle for meaning within well-established economic and social systems that he or she may agree with to a greater or lesser extent.

Gender

In pre-Revolutionary America, the roles of men and women were clearly defined. Men were leaders, politically and personally, and women had a single career path—that of wife and mother. However, as the men marched away to war against the British, women were left at home to run stores and maintain businesses. Though they still lacked many legal rights, this was a taste of freedom, and they enjoyed it. Men returned from war and regained control over their households, but many women kept an eye turned outward, awaiting their chance. Prior to the Civil War, the abolition movement for the rights of slaves rallied women into the public sphere, from where they began to organize for their own rights. At a well-known convention in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848, the first women's rights convention in the United States, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and many other prominent feminists of the time created the Declaration of Sentiments, a shocking document that denounced men's tyranny and demanded equal rights, including the right to vote. This first wave of feminism sparked protests and demonstrations, often heated, until women in America earned the right to vote in 1920 through the ratification of the 19th Amendment.

As the Great Depression racked the country, most women were too preoccupied with working alongside their husbands to keep their families from the brink of disaster, but it was a time that saw many legal changes that would turn out to have great effect on gender equity—the New Deal, the Social Security Act, minimum wage laws, and many others. World War II saw the first great entrance of women into the paid workforce. Just as their great grandmothers before them in the American Revolution had held down the home front as men went away to war, women in the 1940s took over—though this time, more than 350,000 women went to war as well, in auxiliary and nursing units. However, in the post–Industrial Revolution era, that looked much different than in the Revolutionary period. Women took jobs in factories, creating munitions, tanks, and planes. Rosie the Riveter, a familiar and popular symbol of women's strength and determination, fueled ambitious fires, and though at the end of the war, many women were fired to allow men to return to their old jobs, women had gained a foothold in the working world.

The postwar boom in population and economic growth kept women at home for a time, but in the 1960s, the second wave of feminism began to peak, along with other civil rights battles that were being fought. The first introduction of the birth control pill in 1960, and the improvement of the IUD soon after, granted women control over their reproductive rights. This control, in combination with the financial independence that many women had as a result of their greater participation in the workforce, led to a period of greater sexual expression than ever before. Men and women began to discuss sexuality openly—laws governing censorship of pornography were overturned, and studies of sexual behaviors and frank educational manuals were published. Abortion was legalized in 1973 with the Supreme Court decision of *Roe v. Wade,* though many states have restrictions on it in practice, and it is still hotly contested.

This increase in control by women over their own bodies led to campaigns against marital rape and domestic battering, and laws against them gained in strength as women began to feel more confident in their right to speak out about abuse. Gay and lesbian activists also began protesting during this time, a period of openness and revolution against the status quo. Activists of color—African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans—who are enjoined in these struggles also fight a racial bias in the feminist movement, arguing that many of the disadvantages suffered by women are exacerbated by questions of racism. Thus the protests that took place in the 1960s and later were merely the beginning of a struggle for civil rights for all that is currently ongoing.

It is interesting, though perhaps disheartening, to note the fact that, geography aside, the United States would not be welcome to join the European Union because the United States lacks an equal rights amendment for women (or for gays and lesbians). In 1923, an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was proposed that would grant women equality of rights under the law. It was not passed by Congress until 1972, and states were given 10 years to ratify or repudiate it, though this deadline was later extended. There was a strong push to get the ERA ratified, but it fell 3 votes short of the required 38, and though it is reintroduced frequently, it has not yet succeeded. There is also debate on the ratification process, some feeling that the process must begin anew since the time period has expired, and some feeling that as long as it is passed in a "sufficiently contemporaneous" time frame—which, for the 27th Amendment, was 200 years between introduction and ratification—the earlier votes should still be current. A new version of the amendment, known as the Women's Equality Amendment, was proposed in March 2007 and does not contain any time limit.

Opponents of the ERA have a number of politically and emotionally persuasive arguments against the measure. They argue that it could be used to

force women to participate in the draft process and fight in combat, in the event of war, or to undermine laws in place to protect women. States with their own equal rights provisions have had challenges to restrictive abortion laws on the basis of the policy of sex discrimination, and though those challenges had mixed results, it has become a rallying point for pro-life activists. Same-sex marriages, too, have been the subject of lawsuits to a few state courts, arguing in part that the state's policy of nondiscrimination required restrictions on marriage to be dropped. Both abortion and gay marriage, anathema to social conservatives and the Religious Right, would be enough to provide fervent opposition.

Sexual rights and freedoms are a recurring target of social conservative groups, and the debates receive quite a bit of attention in the media and press. The most charged arguments stem from issues of reproductive rights and family planning. The morality of legal abortions is a frequent subject of political wrangling, and many states, particularly where there are large numbers of conservative, evangelical Christians, have passed laws restricting abortion and access to birth control. The right of the woman to prevent or terminate her pregnancy is in opposition to the doctrine of many churches that an unborn fetus has an equal right to protection. Though there are those who support the woman's unconditional right to choose, there are also those who would uphold the fetus's rights as paramount. In South Dakota, the state legislature passed a ban in early 2006 on all abortions, except those that were necessary to save the life of the woman, but voters overturned the ban by referendum in the midterm elections later that year.

There are laws in place that allow health care providers to decline to provide certain medicines or procedures without fear of reprisal. There are nearly 20 states that have these laws, known as refusal clauses, and some corporations allow their employees this right of refusal nationwide. These laws are most commonly called on when the medical service relates, even tangentially, to abortion or contraception. This means that women in more conservative areas have reduced access to prescribed birth control, emergency contraception, and legal abortions. When reproductive rights are abridged due to lack of access, access to treatment for sexually transmitted infections may also be restricted, putting both women and men at risk. Typically, women's rate of infection for many sexually transmitted infections (STIs) is somewhat higher than men's, but this is not the case for the major incurable STI in the United States: AIDS.

HIV and AIDS existed as small, isolated cases in the United States prior to 1981, but the Centers for Disease Control classified the spread of AIDS as an epidemic in mid-1981, primarily among gay men, but also among intravenous drug users and prostitutes, among many others. About 1 million people

in the United States are living with HIV right now, with nearly 40,000 new cases reported each year, mostly in the East and South, plus California. A disproportionate number of African American men are infected, related to that group's disproportionate incarceration rate and the high levels of risky behavior, such as unprotected anal sex, that occur in prisons. African American women who partner these men after their release from prison are also at increased risk. Unfortunately, the high cost of the drug cocktail that treats the disease places it largely out of the reach of the at-risk population. Young men and women, particularly younger gay men, who grew up never *not* knowing about AIDS, are also at a higher risk, a few studies suggest, because they do not take the disease as seriously as it deserves and may be less likely to take precautions. Young people under 25 account for nearly 50 percent of new cases each year.[1] On the other hand, other STIs, like herpes and syphilis, are becoming more and more treatable with advances in medical science.

An example of this advance in medical treatments is the treatment of human papillomavirus (HPV), a common STI that is linked to certain reproductive cancers. Merck received approval from the Food and Drug Administration for distribution of their HPV vaccine, Gardasil, in June 2006. The vaccine, which is given only to young women aged 9–23, protects women from four of the most common strains of the virus, which may lower their risk of cervical cancer. In Texas, Governor Rick Perry issued an executive order that girls must receive the vaccine by sixth grade to attend public school, as of the 2008–2009 school year. Two other governors, in New Mexico and Virginia, have indicated an intention of following suit. However, the Texas State House and Senate overturned the order overwhelmingly. The vaccine is considered controversial because HPV is a STI, and the vaccine can be given to girls as young as nine. Its opponents argue that the vaccination will encourage girls to engage in more risky behavior, considering themselves universally protected.

Oddly, these same opponents who fear for the ignorance of teenagers and young adults are frequently the same folks who support teaching abstinence-only curricula in the place of full sex education and delaying any discussion until high school, when the programs may be too late to reach all students appropriately. The abstinence-only programs, based in conservative religious beliefs, simply tell students of the importance of remaining chaste until marriage, withholding information on STIs or birth control and, on occasion, providing false information about the failure rates of birth control in an attempt to scare teens into chastity. They also ignore the students who are currently unable to marry their partners, even if they would like to—gay and lesbian students. Proponents of comprehensive sex education, on the other hand, favor arming students with knowledge about the actual risks of

premarital sexual behavior and allowing them to come to their own moral conclusions. There is some evidence that in schools with abstinence-only education, levels of teen pregnancy are higher than in schools with comprehensive sex education. While it is true that when teenagers undergo abstinence-only education, they engage in sexual behaviors at a later age, they also tend to do so in less safe ways than their more educated peers—and teen pregnancy is not the only danger of unprotected sex.[2]

Though they might be at risk, for various reasons, of getting in metaphorical *trouble,* girls in general seem to get in less trouble than boys. In school, girls are less likely to repeat grades or be diagnosed with a learning disability or attention-deficit (hyperactivity) disorder and are punished less severely for misbehavior. Despite this attentiveness on the part of girls, boys tend to receive more attention in class than girls, both positive and negative. There are differentials in test scores, but not always to the benefit of boys. Girls tend to do better than boys in reading and writing, but less well in science and math. In high school, girls are equally likely to be enrolled in upper-level math and science classes, but they report feeling as though they are bad at, or that they dislike, math and science. A social stigma still exists for young women who excel in these areas, and though many girls falsely proclaim their mathematical incompetence, it seems that this becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy in their later test scores. This pattern persists throughout both secondary and higher education. Girls are more likely to get advanced credit in humanities classes, while boys are more likely to get credits in math and science classes. Women, especially younger women, are slightly more likely to have a bachelor's degree than are men, but their majors are more likely to be in health, education, or psychology. Men's majors, on the other hand, are more likely to be in computer science or engineering, and the same pattern holds true for advanced degrees.

Overall, fewer women are in the paid workforce than men, but as their level of educational attainment goes up, proportionately higher numbers of women work. However, just as their patterns of degree choice are skewed toward less technical fields, so are women more strongly represented in teaching and caring professions, and less represented in business, computer, and technical occupations. Even when they are in these fields, though, women tend to earn much less than their male peers. In 1970, workingwomen earned an average of 57 cents to every man's dollar. According to recent census figures, in 2005, the median annual salary for a woman, working at least 35 hours per week, year-round, was $32,168, while the median salary for a man was $41,965, making the pay gap 76.7 cents paid to woman to every man's dollar. For a woman working in the relatively well-paying fields of finance or law, however, the gap sinks to 55 percent or less, while social service occupations are the

only field where women earn even 90 percent of their male peers—though salaries for either gender are below the national median income. The pay gap also varies by age: it is 88 percent for women aged 25–34 but between 74 and 76 percent for women workers older than 35.[3]

There are many possible reasons for this pay gap, both historically and ongoing. Women are more likely than men to take several months—or years—off for bearing and rearing children, just when their male peers are working toward promotions and gaining experience for taking a step upward on their career ladder. Even if a woman has no intention of becoming a mother, employers may be hesitant to hire young women at the same rates as young men, for fear that they will shortly be forced to hire a replacement. Though it is illegal to decide explicitly not to hire a woman for this reason, it is difficult to prove outright discrimination. Women may be barred from higher-level positions in this subtle way, or they may choose less demanding, more flexible careers, in which they can take time without losing as much ground because there is less ground to fight over in the first place. There is also a perception that women are not as assertive as men in requesting raises and benefits in hiring negotiations and throughout their careers, leading to a higher pay gap. Because of these perceptions, women face challenges in entering higher levels of business, a highly lucrative and powerful—and male-dominated—field. Women are much less likely to be promoted into upper management, still confronting a glass ceiling, though the term has fallen out of popularity. Conversely, in traditionally female-dominated fields, such as nursing or elementary teaching, men are subject to much swifter promotion than their female peers—they are placed on a glass escalator, to use a comparable term.

Another form of discrimination that women, and some men, face on the job, which negatively affects their job performance, is sexual harassment. Though illegal under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, sexual harassment was not systematically confronted until the early 1990s. More women started reporting sexual harassment after the Clarence Thomas Supreme Court confirmation hearings, in which a subordinate, Anita Hill, testified that he had harassed her, creating a hostile work environment. Though her claim was not corroborated, it shed light on a major problem in American workplaces. Each year, nearly 15,000 claims are filed with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, including about 15 percent of men with a claim. Students of both genders also report being sexually harassed at school, girls more so than boys. This harassment commonly comes from peers but may be directed at students from teachers, though harassment in the workplace may come from a coworker but is more likely to come from a supervisor or manager. Retaliation is common when the victim complains, and male victims are likely to be ridiculed. The impact on the worker, and the

workplace, can be disastrous, and employers are becoming more and more motivated to minimize the risk of incurring claims of harassment. The care that is being taken will help to create more equitable working environments.

At another level, a fairly good indicator of gender equality is the election of women to the highest levels of government. As of 2007, one of the nine justices serving on the Supreme Court was a woman. Sandra Day O'Connor, who had been on the Court since 1981, retired in 2006, leaving only Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who had joined her in 1993. Another woman, Harriet Miers, was proposed by President George W. Bush as a replacement for O'Connor, but she declined the nomination amid protests that her qualifications were inappropriate for the position. The position was filled by Samuel Alito instead, leaving only one woman on the bench. Until 1994, there were at most two women in the Senate at any time, and no more than 20 in the House. Those numbers have risen, and currently, there are 16 female senators and 67 female representatives—a bare 15 percent of Congress. Despite this, the most powerful position in the House of Representatives, speaker of the House, was held by a woman, Rep. Nancy Pelosi, as of January 2007. Additionally, a front-running candidate in the 2008 Democratic presidential campaign was a woman, Hillary Rodham Clinton, and more than 78 percent of voters have indicated that they would be willing to vote for a woman for president.[4]

The struggle for equality between the sexes seesaws back and forth. Currently, the term *feminist* is out of vogue; young women enjoy their rights and try to fight back when they see gender discrimination, but to be a feminist is somehow supposed to represent a militant attitude or a hatred of men. The conservative men's rights movement exaggerates this antifeminist perception, while more liberal, antisexism activists try to avoid alienating potential allies. Male privilege in America has been pervasive, particularly in the economic and public sphere, yet gender-based inequalities are not limited to women. For instance, women in the United States have a life expectancy nearly six years longer than that of men. Both suicide and homicide rates are higher for men than for women, and the most dangerous jobs, with the highest levels of workplace deaths, are held primarily by men. In many physical careers, such as the military or law enforcement, the entrance requirements are gender-normed, meaning that men must pass more stringent requirements than women, and men's rights advocates argue that this differential leaves men with a heavier burden than their female peers. Additionally, only men must register with the Selective Service System so that they may be drafted into military service, and only men may serve in infantry combat roles, on submarines, or in special programs such as the Navy SEALs.

Furthermore, there is a differential treatment of statutory rapists by gender. Women who have sex with young men aged 13–16, if they are prosecuted

at all, are likely to receive probation, community service, or a token prison sentence, while men who have sex with young women of the same age are likely to receive sentences of 20 years in prison and are forced to register on sex-offender lists, with nary a smile to be found. The sexuality of young men is treated with indulgence, while the sexuality of young women is protected, despite the fact that both boys and girls can be harmed by these relationships, particularly with teachers and others in a position of authority above them. Men are cast as sexual aggressors in both cases, and women as victims or, at best, coconspirators, and this perception does no one justice.

The view of men as aggressors is pervasive and, in cases where men are victimized, harmful. Though the vast majority of reported intimate partner violence cases are instances of men abusing their female partners, it is unclear how many men are silent victims of violence from partners of either gender. The stigma that attaches to domestic violence makes it difficult to gauge levels of abuse that occur behind closed doors. Most of the support systems for intimate partner violence, such as shelters, are in place for women who have been abused by their male partners and ignore the needs of women fleeing abusive female partners or men fleeing their intimate partners. Shelters for battered men exist, but at a much smaller proportion to shelters for battered women.

Not all gender identification is based in this sort of male-female duality. There are a number of people, though it is difficult to know how many, who do not feel as though they fit into traditional male-female categories. Some were born with ambiguous sexual characteristics, and some come to feel that their physical and social gender categories are in opposition. Many cultures have a category for male-identified people who were born as women, or female-identified people who were born as men, as well as those who were born in ambiguity, and America is no different, although this gender fluidity is still technically defined in the fourth edition of the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* as *gender identity disorder,* a mental illness. Nonetheless, many people in the United States live contrary to their original gender assignment, whether or not they choose to take hormones or undergo surgery to complete the change. There are also those who prefer androgyny, but this is even more difficult than changing one's gender—in the United States, gender is important, however it is decided on.

Marriage

The institution of marriage in the United States is constantly being redefined. When British settlers first began to arrive in the seventeenth century,

a wife's status and legal position was closer to property than partnership. Divorce was nearly impossible. However, as the American Revolution began to bring more republican values, even marriage was changed. The conception of marriage began to shift toward ideals of love and partnership. Those ideals were not translated into legal equality until quite recently, but modern conceptions of marriage include relative egalitarianism, in legal, if not always practical, terms.

What exactly is marriage? There are four components, some or all of which may be present: a civil bond, a personal bond, community recognition, and religious recognition.[5] The civil bond represents recognition by the state, such as in the issuance of a marriage license, that the couple intends to wed, and the religious recognition of the bond is the affirmation of that bond within the couple's house of worship. The personal bond is the private agreement between two people to share their lives, and the community recognition is the public declaration of that agreement. Couples who elope are no less married than couples who wed in front of 200 of their friends and family members; couples who are legally prohibited from obtaining a civil marriage can commit to each other privately and feel just as married. For instance, before the Civil War, slaves were prohibited from marrying. They nonetheless developed ceremonies of their own within their community that celebrated the personal commitments of devoted couples. To be considered wed, the couple merely needed to jump over a broomstick in the presence of witnesses, a practice adapted from a West African marriage tradition. Some African Americans incorporate it into modern ceremonies as a reminder of their ethnic heritage. In addition, after the Civil War, many states had antimiscegenation laws, which prohibited African Americans and whites from marrying. The Supreme Court decision in *Loving v. Virginia* overturned those laws in 1976, despite widespread popular disapproval for interracial marriage. Today, few would bat an eye at an interracial relationship.

The patterns for American marriages have been changing. More and more, young people of both genders are leaving their parents' houses after finishing school (either high school or college) and establishing single homes on their own before deciding to wed. This can be shown by rising age at first marriage. In 1980, the average ages at first marriage were just over 23 years for men and just under 21 years for women; in 2005, that had become 27 and nearly 26 years, respectively. Most Americans do marry eventually, though. By the age of 35, 72 percent of Americans have been married, and by the age of 65, that number rises to 96 percent, except for African American men and women, only 90 percent of whom have ever been married by age 65, and for Asian American women, 99 percent of whom have been married at least once by age 65.[6]

Couples do not necessarily stay married, however. In recent years, there have been approximately 7.5–8 new marriages for every 1,000 Americans, and 3.7 divorces per 1,000 each year.[7] At first glance, that seems to point to a 50 percent divorce rate since the legalization of no-fault divorces around 1960. This conventional wisdom that half of all marriages end in divorce, which is a statistic frequently cited by social conservatives fearing for the disappearance of the so-called traditional family arrangement, is often seized on to monger fear. However, this number is a bit misleading, as any statistician could explain. Very few of those 3.7 divorces are from the marriages formed that year; couples divorce anywhere from 60 days into a marriage to 60 years into it. However, many failed marriages tend to end within the first decade, and most (80%) marriages that fail do so within 20 years.[8]

Additionally, this number of 3.7 divorces per 1,000 people in 2004 shows a decline in gross numbers of divorces per year over the last 25 years: in 1980, there were approximately 5.3 divorces per 1,000 people. The actual longitudinal divorce rate is that approximately 31–35 percent of all marriages will end in divorce, down from the 41 percent of 25 years ago.[9] That statistic shows a growing split by educational attainment as well: college graduates are about half as likely to end up divorced than non–college grads.[10] Perhaps it is the later age at first marriage that contributes to the growing stability of the relationships. Perhaps the greater economic stability of college graduates contributes to stability at home as well. Whatever the reason, American marriages are becoming more stable, not less.

Despite the fact that most people marry at some point in their lives, there are other types of relationships and living arrangements, in addition to legal marriages. In actuality, married couples are in the minority these days. According to 2005 census data, out of 111.1 million households, only 49.7 percent of them were composed of married couples—with or without children. There are a number of factors that contribute to this decline. Because of the rising age at first marriage, many young men and women live alone, or with roommates, after finishing their education but before they get married, accounting for over one-fourth of the remaining households. Additionally, couples increasingly feel free to cohabit without stigma, and that number is rising. These unmarried couples made up 5 percent of the households. There are also households headed only by women or by men as a result of divorce. A fourth factor, the gap in life expectancy between men and women, means that women may live for several years as widows.[11]

There are other unmarried couples, who, unlike the above families, might prefer to get married. But just as African slaves could not wed before the Civil War, or African American and white couples for a century after it, they are legally barred from obtaining a civil marriage. Currently, the rights and

privileges of marriage are restricted only to heterosexual couples. Indeed, it has only been in the last few decades that other types of couples have been recognized as existing at all. Until as recently as 2003, homosexuality has actually been against the law. Many states had laws in place that prohibited certain sexual acts that could be used to prosecute the behavior of consenting adults within the privacy of their own homes. Though heterosexual privacy had been protected since 1972, it was not until June 2003 that the Supreme Court struck down the sodomy laws of Texas, and all others like it, as unconstitutional in *Lawrence v. Texas.*

American gays and lesbians had fought for civil rights for many years, with increasing success, as social norms expanded to accept a wider range of sexual expression. Though there were some moderate and tentative attempts at social activism prior to 1969, the Stonewall riots are generally credited with beginning the modern fight for civil rights. For a week in late June 1969, a group of gay and transgender club-goers in Greenwich Village rioted against the police raids and persecution that they could no longer tolerate. Soon after, the Gay Liberation Front was founded, as well as a number of other activist groups, and many legal and social battles were launched. For the next several decades, gay rights groups fought for antidiscrimination laws in employment, housing, parenting and adoption, medical treatment, and other civil rights. Religious and conservative groups opposed these laws, and only 17 states (and the District of Columbia) prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Additionally, gays may not serve openly in the U.S. military, though they may do so if they are celibate and silent about their orientation—a law passed by President Bill Clinton in 1992 and better known as don't ask, don't tell.

There is another civil right for which gay and lesbian groups are currently fighting. In 1996, President Clinton signed into law another piece of legislation, the Defense of Marriage Act, which defined marriage as "a legal union of one man and one woman as husband and wife" and *spouse* as "refer[ing] only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife" for the purposes of federal law. It also allowed states to decide individually whether or not to allow for same-sex marriage, but it provided that no state is forced to recognize the marriages that may be legal in another.[12] There are over 1,000 federal laws that apply only to married couples, relating to taxation, property rights, immigration, inheritance, and benefits. For example, heterosexual married couples can file taxes jointly, inherit property with no estate tax, receive survivorship benefits, and obtain visas for non-American partners. Gay couples are thus at a significant economic disadvantage compared to their straight neighbors.

Some states and regions are taking steps to minimize that disadvantage, even though the federal government does not recognize their decisions.

Limited rights, in the form of a reciprocal beneficiary registration, have been available in Hawaii since 1997. In 2000, Vermont governor Howard Dean signed into law a provision for civil unions for gay and lesbian couples that would guarantee their rights in the eyes of the law, introducing the idea of a parallel civil institution into the common debate. New Jersey and Connecticut followed suit. A few other states—California, Maine, and the District of Columbia—have passed protections for domestic partnerships for couples regardless of gender, and a number of large cities have done so as well. For a brief period of time in February 2004, marriage licenses were issued to over 4,000 same-sex couples in San Francisco, before the mayor was forced by the state government to cease, and these marriages were voided by the state supreme court a few months later. Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, who had been a couple for 51 years, became the first gay couple to marry in the United States. In May 2004, Massachusetts legalized marriage for gay and lesbian couples, and there are seven other states, mostly those with civil unions, that are considering that legislative step. There are a number of

Phyllis Lyon, left, 79, and Del Martin, right, 82, both of San Francisco and a couple for 51 years, hold up their marriage certificate outside city hall after they were married in a civil ceremony in San Francisco. © AP Photo/Eric Risberg.

companies that are friendly to their gay employees as well and offer partner benefits, though those benefits are classified as taxable compensation, where comparable benefits to straight partners are not. Despite these benefits, the Defense of Marriage Act prohibits the federal government from recognizing any of these types of unions as legal.

The idea of gay marriage was a hot-button issue for every election since 1996, and in 2004 and 2006, many states passed amendments to their state constitutions ruling that marriage must remain an exclusively heterosexual right. Paradoxically, some states that have protections for gay couples also have laws or constitutional amendments defining marriage as a strictly heterosexual right. Opponents of gay marriage protest that allowing marriage between two men or two women is one step closer to condoning polygamy, incestuous marriages, or human-animal marriage. They argue that the sanctity of marriage must be preserved, and if even a portion of the definition of marriage is relaxed, the institution would be meaningless. This emotional argument appealed to voters, and most amendments passed with high percentages of the vote in states where they were proposed. At an extreme level, President George W. Bush put forward a Federal Marriage Amendment during his 2004 campaign, which would modify the Constitution to define marriage as belonging only between a man and a woman and would eliminate the already established benefits in any city or state that has previously allowed them.

Some states are battlegrounds over gay marriage and civil unions. In May 2006, the Nebraska ban on gay marriage, civil unions, domestic partnerships, and all other forms of gay partnerships was struck down by a district court on the grounds that it violated the rights of gay couples to assemble for advocacy, protected both by the 1st Amendment and the due process clause of the 14th Amendment. Only a month later, a similar ban, on both gay marriages and civil unions, was struck down in Georgia, based on a ruling that the ban violated the state's rule that all amendments be limited to a single subject. However, the ban was almost immediately reinstated by a superior court. The struggle over the real definition of marriage is ongoing.

Family

Just as marriage changed in Revolutionary America, the ideals of motherhood and family changed as well. Out of the ashes of the Revolution was born the cult of true womanhood, a set of ideals that mirrored the Victorian idealization—even fetishization—of the mother as a virtuous, perfect, almost goddess-like ruler of the domestic sphere. As the Industrial Revolution and the changing economic patterns drew families from farms into cities, and

workers into factories, men became the driving force for economic support, and women were established as the backbone of the home. Though some social conservatives have enjoyed invoking this nostalgic picture, with everyone in an appointed role and content to stay there, the traditional picture of a family—mother, father, and 2.5 children—has been steadily changing over the last half decade in the United States. Not only do mothers work outside the home at increasing rates, but families themselves are structurally changing, and the numbers of heterosexual nuclear families have been shrinking. In 2005, just over 67 percent of children lived with two parents, down from the nearly 90 percent who did so in 1960. The majority of the remaining third of children lived with just their mother, though 5 percent lived with just their father and 7 percent did not live with either parent, living either with a grandparent or in foster care. The average family size has also been shrinking over the years, from an average of 2.3 children per family in 1960 to 1.18 in 2005.[13]

Because of these changes in family structure, many in the United States who feel an emotional or religious connection to the nuclear family are eager to hear politicians speak of family values. Over the past 15 years, family values have been coded by conservative groups to refer to an overtly Christian viewpoint that opposes abortion, homosexuality, pornography, sex education in schools, and other such morally questionable activities. They rhetorically look back on an easier, more morally sound time in history. However, liberals have begun to co-opt the term, pointing out that supporting universal health insurance, equality in education, regular raises in the minimum wage, and worker's rights may contribute more concretely to the well-being of families, speaking to an economic sensibility, rather than a moral one.

As women began to enter the workplace in large numbers, the goddess of the household ideal held, at the same time that her economic impact on the family was greatly increased. Mothers were effectively turned into superwomen, capable of having a rewarding career and lovely family at the same time, with seeming effortlessness. This effortlessness was only in evidence in magazine articles and advertisements, however. Women were able to permeate the working world with much more ease than they were able to share responsibilities for the work that still needed doing at home, a second shift of labor that they were expected to perform when they got home from work. The women's liberation movement that gained force in the 1980s emphasized a change in women's roles, without a corresponding emphasis on change in men's roles, with the result that housework became an odd sort of minefield. A prominent sociologist in California, Arlie Hochschild, performed a study in the late 1980s on gender equality in housework. She found that in her sampled study of heterosexual, dual-income, middle- and working-class families

with young children, women performed the vast majority of the housework (child care, cooking, cleaning), despite their own expectation of an equal partnership in their family life. This disparity remains largely unchanged: in a 2005 time use study, 84 percent of women performed some household tasks on an average day, while 65 percent of men did so. Of the respondents, women reported doing 2.7 hours of housework on an average day, while men reported only 2.1. Care of young children was similarly skewed along gender lines, with women averaging 3.6 hours of care to men's 1.8.[14]

There are many possible explanations for the negotiation to result in this differential. The first, and most often cited, is that women choose to do the work, willingly or no. Either she or her husband believes in traditional male and female roles around the house, and thus the woman does the housework that needs doing. The second explanation is that women do not have as much bargaining power in the household relative to men because of women's weaker position in the workforce. Because women cannot afford to push the issue and risk the marriage, particularly when children are involved, they must accept a less than equitable negotiation. The average income of women after divorce declines sharply, while men's income actually rises modestly. Because the past economic system has created a situation in which most women are the primary caregivers for children after a divorce, they are more likely than men to be awarded custody of their children. Maintaining two households is more expensive than one, and the one with children is more likely to experience a dip in its standard of living. Perhaps implicitly, it is understood by women that accepting a larger portion of the household work will avert this crisis.

A third explanation for the differential in sharing household work is that because women typically work in lower-paying jobs, at a rate of about 75 cents to every man's dollar, they can afford to take time and energy away from the job, but men tend to be more well paid and thus have to devote more energy into maintaining the career. The second and third explanations are related, obviously, because women cannot strengthen their position in the workplace until they can devote their full energy into their careers, but they cannot afford to do so at the risk of their partners' positions.[15] Most of these explanations apply more broadly than at the level of the individual family—few, if any, couples have this blunt conversation explicitly. Many couples even describe their housework arrangement as equal, even when it is clear that it is not, and some happily embrace the disparity. However, women wishing for a lighter share of the second shift must weigh their unhappiness more carefully than men when deciding to dissolve a marriage.

Many women avoid this struggle before tensions can escalate and devote themselves to full-time housewifery and motherhood. There is a small but

growing number of men who make this choice as well, leaving their partners in the workforce while they choose to remain at home. Only 52 percent of married couples with children under 18 are both employed full-time, though that number is much higher in the upper Midwest and Northeast and much lower in the South and West, particularly in rural areas. While this choice may contribute to familial harmony, there are significant economic costs, even the obvious loss of a second salary aside. The family is dependent on the main earner for health insurance and retirement savings. There is also a risk the at-home parents take because by leaving the paid workforce, they are allowing their résumés and skills for paid work to deteriorate. If divorce or death of their spouse forces them back into the workplace, they are thus at a significant disadvantage. Nonetheless, many stay-at-home parents are happy to be deeply invested in their home life and are aware of the difficulties of the path they have chosen.

There are difficulties in any family life, especially at the very beginning. Most countries guarantee a few weeks of paid maternal leave, and a few guarantee a few days to a few weeks of paid paternal leave. The United States does not guarantee so much as a single day of paid leave, either maternal or paternal, though as long as an employee has worked for at least a year for a certain type of large employer or the government, they are allowed up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave within each year. This leave is protected by the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993, which also guarantees leave to take care of any family member or oneself, not just a new infant. Some states have more generous policies, such as California's recently guaranteed six weeks of paid family leave, but family-friendly policies are generally left to the uncertain goodwill of individual companies. Smaller companies are more likely to be flexible in helping employees, while larger companies have more resources to be generous with benefits, leave, and programs like on-site day care.

When this last benefit is not provided by the employer, parents must make other arrangements for the care of their children. There are a number of options for those who can afford to pay: in-home care, such as a nanny, can be quite expensive, and places in good day care centers can be hard to find. The cost and availability of quality care is a significant factor, especially when the mother of a young child wants or needs to work. Finding and paying for day care is a problem, especially for single parents, and may be involved in keeping one partner at home, if his or her job does not pay enough to cover the expenses involved in taking it.

A few working-class or single parents, for whom working is not a matter of choice, are lucky enough to have family nearby who can pool resources to care for children. If they can find a small provider, likely a woman who cares for several children in her own home, this is likely to be the next most

cost-effective option. Some low-income families also qualify to send their children to federally funded preschools known as Head Start, although funding has been steadily decreasing for these programs. Just as the U.S. government does not provide for mandatory parental leave, it also does not provide for adequate day care for those same working parents. Day cares can range significantly in quality, and the effects are frequently reflected in the behavior of the children that they help to raise. Children who were in day care at young ages for longer periods of time were more likely to be considered aggressive, assertive, and disobedient when starting kindergarten, though better-quality care was less likely to encourage those behaviors. However, parental sensitivity, income level, and educational attainment were significant mitigating factors in decreasing undesirable behavior. Nonetheless, there are public figures that consistently express disapproval at parents—mostly at mothers, in fact—who send their children to day care, as if by working, they have somehow failed their children through participation in paid employment.

For a significant amount of time in the history of the United States, children were expected to contribute to the household economy, especially children of lower and working classes. When born to a farming family, they would perform chores from a young age; when born to a city family, they might help at a family business, be apprenticed out, or be expected to take factory work. After 1938, however, the minimum age for child workers was set at 16, with possible exceptions for 14- and 15-year-olds, if their work did not interfere with their schooling. In modern households, children are generally expected to perform light chores, for which they may or may not receive an allowance, until they turn 16. There are a number of younger teens with lawn-mowing or babysitting gigs, but after age 16, unless the casual work is lucrative, most teenagers take a part-time job in retail or food service—low-paying but flexible positions. Most dangerous jobs are restricted from teenagers, but it has become an expected norm that high school students will either hold a part-time position or pursue a particularly rigorous academic schedule—idleness is seen as laziness or sloth, and working even low-status positions can confer adult respect to teenagers. The jobs can also provide some adult freedoms, allowing the teenager to purchase an inexpensive car and pay for dates and other social activities away from the parental home. This independence is encouraged, within limits. There are limits on how many hours teenagers may work, and some areas still have curfews that restrict their free movements.

There are other laws that are designed to help protect children such as laws restricting certain behaviors until a set age, such as drinking or sexual activity. The drinking age in the United States is set at 21, though adulthood, in the form of voting rights or participation in military services, is usually conferred at the age of 18. This leaves young adults between 18 and 21 in a somewhat

awkward position, uniquely among their global peers. It is only in the United States that a 20-year-old, who may be legally married with a child or two, cannot be served a glass of wine with dinner—for his or her own protection. There are also laws governing the age that a young adult can consent to sex or marriage, generally from 16 to 18 in most states.

There are also mandated protections for children's safety and welfare at a younger age. There is a program known as WIC, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, run by the federal government, that provides low-income women and their under-five children with health care screening, nutrition education, and some subsidized foods, mainly dairy products, juices, and cheap proteins such as beans, tuna, and peanut butter. Beyond the most basic needs, the state also carefully monitors children's physical safety with their parents, with mandatory reporting laws making nearly every public employee a required reporter of suspected abuse. When a parent cannot adequately or safely care for a child, there is a system for foster care in place. Though there are federal laws governing the general requirements, each state has its own guidelines in place for investigating claims and making care plans for at-risk children.

If a child has been abused, a report is made to Child Protective Services (in some states, this department is known as the Department of Children and Family Services, in an attempt to create a less contentious atmosphere). If the claim is judged as valid after investigation, the child is removed from the parents' home and placed in foster care, either with foster parents or in a group home. Foster parents generally receive a small stipend for the care of the children they take in, and states may require that they be licensed or otherwise credentialed to provide care. There have been several well-publicized cases of foster parents taking in more children than they can handle for the stipend that they would bring, but those cases are vastly outnumbered by the people who choose to bring abused, needy, and time- and emotionally demanding children into their homes, for a sum that is laughably inadequate for the costs of the care required. Additionally, some foster parents later adopt foster children they have cared for, once parental rights have been terminated.

Adoption, however, would be an exceptionally good outcome; most children remain in foster care for several years and have multiple placements, bouncing from home to home. There are over half a million children in foster care nationwide, a number that has more than doubled in the last 40 years due to tightening of reporting laws for child abuse. A disproportionate number of these children are children of color, particularly African American children, largely owing to racial inequality in treatment by the system—white children receive more services and are more likely to be reunited with

parents, and are thus removed more quickly from the system. Though the stated goal of foster care is to find children families, whether through reconciliation or adoption, many more children are placed into foster care each year than leave the system. The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 was passed in an attempt to limit the amount of time children spend in the system by shortening the amount of time between their entry into foster care and the termination of parental rights to 15 months and demanded that a care plan be made for children so that they and their caseworkers have a stated goal. However, most children in foster care are emotionally and psychologically fragile, and many have special physical needs as well; finding adoptive parents is a bit more easily said than done. A few hundred African American children are finding homes outside of the United States, reversing a popular trend for foreign adoption, but this is still an infinitesimal portion of the children needing permanent homes.

If the reason for a familial upheaval is not abuse, but the parents are still unable to care for their children, a social worker may help the family place the child with relatives such as grandparents. As single parenthood has increased, the role of the grandparent has increased in many families. A significant number of children live with a grandparent, some with parents present and many without. These types of households are more likely than any other to be in poverty for a number of reasons. Multigenerational homes of this sort are likely to be composed of African American or Latino families, who are more likely to be in poverty in general compared to white families. Also, the sort of familial upheaval that produces the social conditions under which this is an option—teen parenthood, drug abuse, un- or underemployment of a parent—is not one that lends itself to economic success. Additionally, the grandparents may likely be retired from the workforce and on a limited pension or Social Security benefit and less capable of finding supplemental income than a younger caretaker. There are many households headed by grandparents that receive public assistance.

There are a number of couples, or single people, who wish to have children but cannot. For them, adoption can be a good option. There are several different types of adoption in the United States. Children can be adopted publicly, from foster care. As discussed previously, this can be a troubling process, but foster children benefit greatly from receiving a permanent, caring home. Prospective parents can also choose to go to a private agency, especially if they particularly wish to adopt an infant or a child without the risk of the social problems that affect the abandoned and neglected. This can be an expensive option, and the wait for an appropriate child may be several years long. If the parents wish to ensure that they adopt an infant with particular characteristics—his curly hair, or her blue eyes, for instance—they can pursue

an adoption independently, with a pregnant young woman with whom they reach an agreement. This is not legal in all areas of the United States, however, and can be just as expensive as private agency adoption.

Another option for prospective parents is international adoption. About 13 percent of adopted kids are from overseas, nearly 21,000 of the 65,000 that took place in 2006. This can be a highly expensive option for would-be parents: there are agency fees, at least two trips overseas to visit the child's country, and there is a high risk of expensive health care being needed. Despite this financial barrier, the number of international adoptions has been steadily rising for over a decade, and the option has been seen as an increasingly popular one, particularly because of some highly publicized cases of celebrities adopting foreign orphans. However, the increasing demand for orphaned foreign children also increases the risk of child trafficking, either by desperately poor parents willing to sell their children to orphanages for mutual profit, or by private brokers stealing children to sell to American parents. The International Criminal Court (ICC) at the Hague has attempted to prevent this sort of exploitation, but it remains a concern for adoptive parents, and enforcement is difficult within the United States as it is not a member of the ICC as of 2007. Countries that provide the largest numbers of adopted children have been taking steps to slow international adoptions themselves, at least in some cases. In 2006, there were tightening restrictions on parents wishing to pursue foreign adoptions from China, South Korea, and Romania, and those new barriers have led to decreasing numbers of adoptees. Prospective parents have new requirements for age, weight, mental health history, and sexual orientation—single people adopting from China must affirm that they are heterosexual, for instance—and fewer parents can pass the more stringent tests.

Adoption is not open to all in the United States, either. There are several states, in the South and Midwest, that explicitly ban gay couples from adopting, and Utah even bars cohabiting straight couples from adopting children together. Every state but Florida allows gay and lesbian people to adopt individually, though the parental rights cannot be legally shared. Some states, mostly those that have more liberal gay union laws, allow for second-parent adoption, but most areas have inconsistent court records on the matter. In many cases, one partner loses all visitation rights over children that they may have raised from infancy should the partnership dissolve, and they would be considered legal strangers.

When all is said and done, the real definition of family is created by the participants; however, much legal definition might restrict or allow some rights. In the United States, there are as many definitions of family as there are members of families. Extended kinship ties can be strong, creating a small-town

A family consisting of seven adopted children hold hands in prayer before eating dinner. © AP Photo/The Daily News, Bill Wagner.

feeling with a large and close-knit group of members, or weak, with great distance among its members, who might see each other rarely. A family can be composed of mother, father, and seven children, or a cohabiting couple, or a grandmother with a clutch of grandbabies—and any possible permutation thereof. The only necessity for a family is ties of love.

Education

Education in the United States is seen as a great equalizer; 72,075,000 Americans, from prekindergarten children to graduate students and adults of all ages, were enrolled in educational institutions in the fall of 2005. Prekindergarten, kindergarten, elementary, and secondary enrollment totaled 54.7 million, and postsecondary enrollment, 17.3 million. Of all these students, over 61 million, or a bit more than 85 percent, were enrolled in public schools where opportunities are thought to be equal. There are some problems with this idea, but in general, a motivated student of any race or class can indeed succeed throughout the public school system. The more than 10 million students in private educational institutions have not only equal opportunity, but also receive a deliberately value-based education: 7.6 million of the private school enrollment is in Roman Catholic schools, colleges, and universities, dwarfing the enrollment of other religiously based schools and colleges. The literacy rate in the United States is estimated by

the United Nations to be 99.9 percent, tied for the top spot with 20 other nations.[16]

Schooling in the United States can begin for children as young as three or as old as six, depending on the region. Six out of every 10 children attended some form of prekindergarten school in 2005.[17] Some larger cities have Head Start preschool programs for poor or at-risk children; parents can also choose private or church-run preschools to begin teaching their children. Among more exclusive circles, such as the Upper West Side of Manhattan in New York City, entrance into the correct preschool is seen as crucial to getting into a highly ranked prep school, and from there into a top-tier university. Waiting lists for those schools are often longer than the prospective student is old.

The next step for most children is kindergarten, begun at age five. Ninety-eight percent of American children attend at least four hours of kindergarten per day before beginning primary school. The first American kindergarten was begun in 1856 in Watertown, Wisconsin, by a German immigrant, and it was conducted entirely in German. The first English-speaking kindergarten was begun four years later in Boston, Massachusetts. The program, originally a nurturing environment for young children to transition into schooling, gradually became more of a practical learning environment: many or most programs have reading and math instruction every day. Kindergarten, which can be either a half- or a full-day program, is more common in large cities and small towns, where it is offered in 64 percent of public schools, than it is in suburban areas or smaller cities, where only 46 percent of public schools offer it. Additionally, students in the South are more likely to benefit from kindergarten programs as 84 percent of public schools offer full-day programs.[18] In the Midwest, 57 percent of public schools have full-day programs, and only 38 percent in the West and 37 percent in the Northeast offer full-day programs. Children who take full-day kindergarten classes begin first grade with a distinct learning advantage over their half-day or no-day peers. Despite this, there is no national requirement for kindergarten. Kindergarten is required in only 14 states and is generally available, but not required, in the other 36.[19]

After kindergarten comes primary school, or elementary school; grade levels in the United States are counted with ordinal numbers, not cardinal numbers. Thus, while one might find a Canadian child in grade one, the corresponding American child would be in first grade. Elementary school lasts for six years, and the 12- and 13-year-old children leave in seventh grade to attend junior high school for two years. Some areas add sixth grade to their junior high, and others add ninth grade—this is commonly called a middle school, rather than a junior high school.

Secondary education includes 9th through 12th grades. In most states, students are required to remain in high school until they are 18, while in others,

they are permitted to leave school at age 16 if they choose. Nearly 90 percent of American students complete high school, although dropout rates tend to be higher in urban than in suburban and rural areas. Boys are more likely to leave school earlier than girls, and African American and Hispanic students are more likely to leave earlier than non-Hispanic white students. Those who leave high school without a diploma find themselves at a significant disadvantage in the job market, and many—up to two-thirds—of those who leave school early choose to pursue a diploma or General Educational Development certificate within eight years.[20]

Public high schools are open to all students who wish to attend, though several different vocational tracks are available. For students who plan to continue in their education, and who score well on tests conducted in the eighth grade, a college preparatory track, consisting of upper-level mathematics, science, and literature courses, will provide a thorough grounding in basics that the students can draw on. Some of these courses, Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate, can even be given college credit if a high score is achieved on an examination. For those students who do not plan to continue their education or who tested below the benchmark for college preparatory classes, less rigorous courses are available as well as some vocational training. In many cities and towns, all-vocational high schools are becoming more frequent for increasing numbers of students.

Arguments have been made that this tracking system is unfair to the students who might be planning to attend college but do not test well enough in junior high to enter the most elite math and science courses. Even if they improve midway through high school or change their minds about their college plans, it is difficult, if not impossible, to catch up and move upward in the track. The tracking system benefits the top 20 percent of students, but the students who perform well in the average classes are inadequately prepared for college coursework, even if they express a desire to continue to college. The debate over tracking is further charged by the fact that many students who tend to be systematically misdirected toward lower tracks are poor or belong to ethnic and racial minority groups.

There are other systematic forms of racial discrimination that still persist in the schools. Following World War II, massive expansion of suburbs combined with high levels of race-based housing discrimination left urban and suburban areas racially segregated. As a result, neighborhood schools were largely racially segregated, and in 1971, the Supreme Court found that the separate schools perpetuated and exacerbated a system of inequality between white students and African American students, and the Court mandated the bussing of students of color from their local schools to mainly white, suburban schools, and white students to mainly African American, urban schools.

This was not a popular order in many cities, and in south Boston, several antibussing protests turned violent throughout the 1970s. As of the 1990s, bussing programs have been phased out, although some school districts have voluntarily retained the practice.

Despite attempts at correcting the inequalities, it cannot be denied that some schools are better funded than others. Schools are primarily funded by local property taxes, with major funding coming from the state and a small proportion of the funds coming from federal money. Because of this emphasis on the local, schools tend to reflect the socioeconomic status of the neighborhood that supports them. In wealthy suburbs, public schools can be lavish, with well-maintained athletic facilities and pools and high levels of per-student spending. At the other extreme are schools in poor, urban districts; while poor parents may pay a higher proportion of their income into property taxes, the schools struggle to provide an adequate environment, let alone sufficient books or desks for the large number of students in each class.

Another attempt at correcting this differential is through establishing magnet schools in urban areas, which have a broad area of potential recruitment. Rather than accepting only students from a limited neighborhood, magnet schools have an entrance process—either aptitude or lottery based—for all students within bussing distance. To make these schools appealing to potential students, magnet schools will offer specialized or particularly innovative programs such as in the arts or sciences. These schools tend to be more racially and ethnically diverse and to have a better academic reputation than many nearby schools. The downside, of course, is that there are limited spots for students eager to attend. These types of schools account for only 3 percent of public schools nationwide, with predominance in California, Illinois, and Virginia.

Other types of educational reforms in public schools are frequent, in an attempt to improve performance and accountability of schools and teachers. Usually, those reforms have been enacted at the state and local level, not at the national level. A national initiative was, however, signed into law on January 8, 2002—the No Child Left Behind Act—was intended to increase the quality of education by increasing the accountability of schools. The act (commonly known as NCLB) requires states to outline guidelines for improvement, which are to be assessed yearly, and schools that do not improve are subject to increasing administrative sanctions as well as provisions that require the district to offer parents the option to transfer their children to another school. NCLB also requires that all teachers be rated as "highly qualified" by the end of the 2005–2006 school year. Under these guidelines, many students have tested higher in reading and math than ever before, and

the gaps in achievement between African American and white nine-year-olds as well as a few others in some areas have lessened. Additionally, NCLB provides more detailed data on the achievement of marginalized groups of students than has been previously available such as poor students, students with disabilities, and students of color. Although it is true that if even one such group fails to improve over a year, the entire school is rated as needing improvement, tracking the economic or racial achievement gaps that exist in schools is the first step to closing them. Each school must also provide a detailed report to parents on the progress of the school as a whole every year.

NCLB has a few major shortcomings, however, that limit its helpfulness in total educational reform. Though the stringent requirements that even the poorest school district is expected to complete are thoroughly outlined, the funding for those requirements has not been attached. Many school districts are already stretched to their limits, and though they would like to hire only highly qualified teachers and afford them all possible professional development, that is simply not feasible without increasing funds. There has also been increased pressure over test scores, leading to claims that some administrators are either encouraging teachers to coach students directly to the tests or are outright manipulating their schools' statistics. Many schools have had to cut time from other subjects to provide more time for teaching reading and math, the only two subjects currently tested. For poor, urban schools that experience high student turnover each year, including a large influx of new immigrants who are not fluent in English, the annual testing and sanctioning procedure seems extraordinarily harsh. Some school districts in California have restricted access of children of illegal immigrants to public education, at least partly because of the effects of NCLB. In Utah, a law has been passed that rejects several of the provisions of NCLB, and at least eight other states are on the verge of following Utah's lead. The act is up for reauthorization in 2007, and all signs point to significant revisions that may leave more leeway for states' use of federal funds.

At a more local level, district school boards have a great deal of leeway over what is and is not taught in schools. School boards may have control over controversial points of curricula, but the publicly elected boards can be forced from office, as happened in Dover, Pennsylvania, over the required teaching of creationism, newly renamed and reframed as intelligent design. Intelligent design is a biblically based origin theory that presupposes the existence of a creator. Some conservative Christian groups are trying to lobby public schools to "teach the controversy," or present the religious explanation as an alternative to the scientific theory of evolution, despite the fact that in the scientific community, no such controversy exists. Intelligent design is not testable and not provable and thus cannot be considered to be a science.

The teaching of origin theories in science classes has been controversial since 1925, when a teacher, John Scopes, was arrested and fined over the teaching of evolution in a Tennessee public school. Eighty years later, a Pennsylvania court found that mentioning creationism as a disclaimer to a discussion of evolution violated the establishment clause of the First Amendment, and the members of the school board who supported intelligent design were voted out of office in late 2005.

The division between church and state in schools is a flexible one that in more religious areas of the United States may be nonexistent. In Texas, one would be hard-pressed to find a high school football game that did not begin with a prayer, for example, and most courts have ruled that the students may express themselves in prayer, unless they cause a substantial disruption thereby. Following these rulings, there have been attempts to reintroduce a formal prayer at the beginning of the school day in many areas, but the most that seems to be allowed is a silent moment for prayer or reflection, rather than allowing outright prayer in schools. In addition to a level of support for religious expression in schools, there are also voucher systems in some states that allow parents to pull their children from public school to attend religious private schools and help pay the students' tuition, thereby providing some level of public funding to parochial schools.

There are steps short of private schooling, however. If traditional public schools cannot serve a student sufficiently, in 40 states, there are alternative forms of publicly funded schools: charter schools, which were created in 1988. These generally urban schools have relatively more autonomy from procedures and requirements than traditional public schools and serve students who may not do as well in public schools. Their purpose is innovation and inspiration to best serve their students, most of whom had bad experiences in other schools. In Michigan and California, the only states where it is allowed, many of these schools operate on a for-profit basis, which gives rise to concerns that the funding that might otherwise benefit students is instead reserved for profits. Even in nonprofit charter schools, though, per-pupil funding tends to be lower than traditional schools, even with donations from businesses and foundations, and it is common for newly chartered schools to flounder. Recent studies have suggested that students in charter schools do not perform as well as students in traditional schools, but charter proponents argue that more accurate demographic correlation of the data would disprove that claim.

One of the reasons students might have for choosing to attend charter schools might be in relation to violence and bullying in public schools. Fighting and bullying are serious problems for nearly one-third of students, and about 6 percent of high school students felt so unsafe that they did not attend

class at all. Yet from a statistical view, students are far safer at school than nearly anywhere else, but schools, especially high schools, are perceived as particularly dangerous. Less than 1 percent of homicides among teenagers occurred at school, but those homicides received an extremely high level of media attention. The shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, on April 20, 1999, in particular, in which 12 students and a teacher were killed, and another 24 injured, served to frighten the entire nation. In the wake of the Columbine shootings, there seemed to be a rash of disaffected, bullied young men bringing guns to school and taking aim at their tormentors. Columbine and the other shootings spurred drug searches, often with dogs, and the installation of metal detectors. Zero tolerance policies became popular for punishing minor infractions. However, these policies are falling out of favor, nearly a decade later, as they limit discretion on the part of the school, and there is little evidence that they are effective.

Another tactic taken by school boards in an attempt to increase levels of discipline is mandating a dress code or uniform policy. Most schools have dress codes, which restrict students from wearing obscene or inappropriate clothing, but some public schools, about one-fifth nationwide, with that number much higher in urban areas, require a uniform. A few uniform programs are voluntary, but in most cases, any students who wish to attend that school must purchase and wear the uniform. There are frequently programs in place to help provide low-cost or free uniforms to needy students, and at $35–40 each, depending on region, many uniforms cost less than street clothing. The benefits of uniform policies include reductions of school violence, reductions of gang-related activity, reductions of obvious economic differences among students, and increased focus on studies. However, there have been few studies that track long-term effects of uniforms, and most of the reports of increases in discipline have been anecdotal. Additionally, some students have brought suits against school districts, arguing that uniform policies violate their freedom of speech. Courts have tended to uphold the right of the school district to impose uniforms to improve learning conditions, and the lawsuits have been largely unsuccessful.

With all the controversy and fear surrounding public schooling, it is unsurprising that some parents would wish to send their students to private or parochial schools or choose to teach them at home. As of October 2005, approximately 12 percent of students were enrolled in private schools.[21] Parents with means have always had the opportunity to decide on private schooling, and there are several thousand day schools and a few hundred boarding schools, many of which are quite expensive. These private schools can, and do, offer a number of high-level college preparatory courses, but they can also offer help to struggling or troubled students, preparation for a military career,

education in the arts, or religious education. The student-to-teacher ratio is usually much lower than in public school, which allows students much more individual attention.

These positives come with a hefty price tag, however, and many lower-income parents—or even middle-class parents—want the option to withdraw their children from public schools and apply the funds that would otherwise be provided to the public schools to the private school tuition. This presents the obvious problem that only a few parents would have this option open to them, and removing funding from the public schools only worsens conditions and the quality of education for the students who are forced to remain in the absence of other options. Additionally, many private schools have a religious affiliation, and channeling government funds to the private schools instead of the public schools could be seen as a violation of the separation of church and state. The constitutionality of a voucher system was upheld in Wisconsin but struck down in Florida, and several other cases are currently ongoing in other states.

There are several other options for parents who feel that neither traditional public nor private schools can provide the right education for their children. There are about 5,000 schools that follow the Montessori method, some 300 of which are publicly funded, and 157 Waldorf schools, both of which espouse particular holistic teaching philosophies that are not considered mainstream by current educational theory. The Montessori schools are based on the philosophy that children want to learn and will teach themselves if guided properly in a collaborative environment. Students are not strictly age segregated, most school assignments are not graded, and positive social skills are emphasized. Success is met with increasing academic challenge, and much of the learning is self-paced. The Waldorf schools similarly emphasize community—students stay with the same teacher from first through eighth grade. However, the Waldorf method involves more structure and a slower introduction to task-based work. Reading is taught later than is traditional, and the education is mapped onto preestablished developmental stages. Both of the methods include preparation for college as a stated goal for the students.

Parents who decline these options, or who live in an area where they are not available, may choose to homeschool their children. In many nations, homeschooling is not a legal option, but as long as students pass compulsory testing, parents are afforded much leeway in the United States. Traditionally, homeschooling has been perceived as highly religiously oriented, but it is gaining in popularity among less conservative families. Nearly 1.1 million students were being taught at home in 2003, which is about 2.2 percent of the student population.[22] The majority of these students were in rural areas,

in the South, and with one parent in the labor force and one parent who was not. There are many reasons for choosing to homeschool such as the parents' feeling that they can do a better job of educating their child, their objection to things that are taught in public school, a lack of challenges or resources provided by the local schools, or even transportation issues for rural families, among many others. There are several curricular choices for the parent who homeschools, from Montessori and Waldorf to a variety of private homeschooling organizations. Churches and religious institutions also provide some materials, as do some public schools. Homeschooled students tend to do vastly better than their traditionally schooled peers on achievement tests and self-esteem measures. Opponents to homeschooling argue that students' socialization is limited by not attending school, but most homeschooling families are careful to foster civic engagement in their children.

After high school, students can continue on to postsecondary studies if they so choose. In 2005, nearly half of young adults—over 17 million of them—were enrolled in some form of higher education, though the majority of students in higher education are women—56 percent of those who are enrolled. College attendance has risen sharply in the last few decades, and nearly one-third of Americans have a bachelor's degree, though the proportion who have degrees is higher in the Northeast and lower in the South. This is likely due to population density and the number of urban centers, which employ more degreed professionals, rather than any real geographical characteristic. There is also a racial gap in educational attainment, with proportionately low numbers of African Americans and Hispanics achieving an advanced degree, though these numbers have risen every year.[23]

Access to higher education is open to all students, in theory, though some options may be limited by a student's means. The U.S. military pays for the higher education of its veterans through a program called the G.I. Bill, first introduced after World War II. Many young men and women who would not otherwise have the resources to attend college join the military for three or four years to take advantage of this benefit. Additionally, there are federal grants and loans for which needy students may apply as well as loans and grants awarded by private institutions and foundations. Students in private colleges, even religiously based ones, are eligible for federal financial aid if they qualify on a standard needs basis. Some states also subsidize the higher costs of private college expenses with fixed grants that go directly to its student citizens. Church-state separation is not violated, it is argued, because grants and loans go through the schools directly to the students. Private schools are also eligible for federal research and other special funds with the proviso that no federal money may be used for religious purposes. Colleges and universities also have their own need- and merit-based financial aid awards for poor or

particularly talented—academically or athletically—students. Despite these attempts at financial aid, tuition rises every year, and many students graduate with a heavy student loan burden.

There is no national system of colleges in the United States, with the exception of the military academies; instead, the existing public universities have been established by individual states. These schools can be quite affordable for low-income and working students, and though some have better reputations than others, millions of students matriculate in state universities and colleges each year. There are several options other than state college. For students with even more constrained budgets, community colleges and technical institutes offer certifications and practical degree options at a lower level. There are also colleges that serve particular groups, such as women's colleges, historically African American colleges, or tribal institutions. For students with greater loan or scholarship opportunities, or simply wealthier parents, private colleges abound, from the small and local schools to the large and prestigious Ivy League universities. These prestigious schools also attract nearly a half million foreign students, from all regions of the globe.

Entrance to these prestigious schools can be highly competitive. As in many other countries, there is a strong market for tutoring and test preparation tools. In trying to gain entrance to the college of their choice, students and their parents may spend thousands of dollars on professional preparation. High school students pay a fee to take standardized tests, either $41 for the SAT Reasoning Test for students on either coast, or $29 for the ACT Assessment for students in the Midwest and South, or both, if they plan to apply to colleges in a diverse geographical area, though these fees may sometimes be waived if a student can demonstrate hardship. There are a number of companies that offer tutoring directed toward raising scores on these tests, and there is a large market in manuals and preparatory books. Because this intensive training is usually quite effective in raising test scores, teenagers with greater access to economic resources are advantaged in this aspect of university admission. They also have an advantage in the academic black market; there are a growing number of services from which a struggling student can purchase a prewritten essay. Though the specter of expulsion hangs over this market, desperate students with means have been known to go to desperate lengths for better grades.

There are other transgressions, besides the possibility of cheating their way in, for determined troublemakers to find at college. Students at residential colleges are less likely to be victims of violent crime than their nonstudent peers.[24] However, the popular perception of a college experience includes a great deal of *Animal House*–esque drunken revels, resulting in the sort of crimes that generally result from heightened levels of alcohol consumption

such as sexual assaults, hazing, and assaults. Though many residential campuses are quite pretty—a haven of green grass and shady trees in the midst of a city—they are often not nearly as much as an uncorrupted sanctum as they appear. Increasingly, crime on campus is attracting attention. A horrifying incident at Virginia Tech on April 16, 2007, in which a 23-year-old male student opened fire in two different locations, killing 32 students and faculty and wounding many more, brought awareness to campus violence, just as the shooting in Littleton, Colorado, brought awareness of high school violence in 1999. However, such violence at university campuses is rarer than at high schools; the last such incident occurred in 1966. Despite these well-publicized horror stories, the fact remains that crime is much lower on campus than in the United States overall: the murder rate in the United States was 5.7 per 100,000, and the murder rate on campus was 0.13 per 100,000.[25]

After safely obtaining an undergraduate degree, many students opt for further schooling, continuing to graduate, medical, law, and business colleges for advanced degrees. Fifty-nine percent of the students who choose to do so are women. Many of the students who continue their education work full-time, in addition to attending school. Though some fields pay stipends to graduate students, full funding is rare for all but the most highly sought after students. Graduate school is traditionally a time of poverty for students, even while working or with family support. There is not necessarily an expectation of a large payoff, as there might be at professional schools, such as medical school, if the graduate student expects to remain in academia as a professor, though a master's degree or doctorate may pay dividends in the private sector. The salaries for those with advanced degrees are considerably higher than for those with bachelor's degrees, of course. Training for the higher-paying professions of business, medicine, and law also causes students to incur high levels of debt, in most cases. Doctors, in particular, must train for many years before seeing any benefit of the high expected salary and must pay down student loans for many years after graduating. This risk of debt is not enough to discourage prospective doctors, it must be noted.

Other types of education come at a bit of a premium. There has recently been a rise in the field of universities operating for profit. There are dozens of schools offering degree options, typically to older students who are already in the workforce and want to return to school to maximize their earnings potential but have trouble attending traditional college. Some of these schools offer distance learning, so students anywhere can take courses from the University of Phoenix, for instance. Unlike traditional models of colleges, which require students to take general education courses and expect professors to be leaders in academic research, these for-profit schools offer directed courses in

fields with high demand—nursing, computer science, and accounting, for example—and hire teachers only to teach. Anyone with the money for tuition is accepted into the program, and the course schedules are quite flexible.

Detractors of for-profit education raise some legitimate concerns over these programs. Privatizing education seems contrary to American ideals, and the prospect of public knowledge becoming the property of a corporation seems antithetical to traditional academic systems. In this model, the students become customers, and the quality of their education may suffer in deference to the company's profit margin. There have been some scandals and lawsuits involving some of these schools, and students must be careful to research their schools of choice. Many of these schools, however, are careful to emphasize their commitment to their students' success and boast high rates of postgraduate career placement.

There is yet another mode of adult education; in particular, new immigrants who wish to become naturalized citizens of the United States must pass an examination—in English—on the U.S. government and swear an oath of loyalty to the United States. To pass this test, many immigrants enroll in English as a second language courses and civic education courses, available in most communities free or at a low cost. There are currently about

Immigrants from Bosnia-Herzegovina become American citizens as they listen to the Pledge of Allegiance during a naturalization ceremony. © AP Photo/East Valley Tribune, Jennifer Grimes.

35 million foreign-born Americans, 13 million of whom have undergone the process to become naturalized citizens. They go to great lengths to learn about their adopted country and how to succeed as Americans—and what, really, could be as American as that?

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4

Holidays and Leisure

Wende Vyborney Feller

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.

—Stephen King, *The Shining*

Americans are notorious for their reluctance to make time for play. On average, they work five more weeks each year than Brazilians or the British and two and a half weeks more than Canadians, Mexicans, Australians, or the Japanese. While the French average 39 vacation days each year—and use them—Americans accrue only 14 vacation days and typically leave four of those unused. And when Americans do go on vacation, 41 percent of office workers bring their laptops and plan to work.[1]

This appetite for work must be a surprise to the sociologists who predicted, back in the 1950s, that Americans would soon be burdened by an excess of leisure. At the same time, the American standard of 14 vacation days and half a dozen paid holidays represents a significant increase in leisure time from 150 years ago, when 12-hour workdays and six- or even seven-day workweeks were common—and even Christmas was not necessarily a day of rest. Although fairs, celebrations, sports contests, and hobbies appear in the first records of American history, not until 1870 were there official holidays that guaranteed many workers a day without labor. Today, as Americans come to expect around-the-clock shopping and entertainment, holidays are again becoming unstuck from the idea of rest and play.

Holidays

Holidays in American culture encompass a wide range of events. The closest approach to a list of national holidays is the 10 federal holidays, which represent vacation days given to employees of the federal government and which are often also given as paid holidays by state and private employers: New Year's Day, the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr., Washington's birthday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. This federal holiday list scarcely defines what Americans see as events worth celebrating since it omits three of the holidays that Americans celebrate most enthusiastically: Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, and Halloween.

Broadening the definition to include official observances makes almost every day a holiday. There are enough federal observances to average one per week, year-round. Add state observances, and it is possible to pack a dozen holidays into a single day: May 1 is Loyalty Day, Bird Day, Family Day, Law Day, Lei Day, and a national Day of Prayer as well as the first day of month-long commemorations of Asian Americans, families, keeping Massachusetts beautiful, kindness, law enforcement workers, children, composers, senior citizens, the steel industry, and women veterans.

Given that Thanksgiving was a traditional event before it became a federal holiday, perhaps a holiday may be defined as a community festival that gains nationwide popularity. Certainly there are plenty of festivals vying for consumers' leisure and dollars. Popular festival themes include local history, local industry or agriculture, music, ethnic heritage, gay pride, food, and flowers. A typical festival includes a parade, a craft or art show, food vendors, face painting, musical performances, and possibly a competition to crown a queen or princess from among local young women.

Although it is easy to assume that a festival honoring a community's Swedish heritage or plethora of rattlesnakes has roots in the distant past, few festivals predate World War II. One researcher found that in Minnesota, about one-third of community festivals started in the 1980s, and fully 12 percent were part of a Bicentennial-era surge of interest in local history. Festivals do not necessarily grow organically from local tradition, either. When organizers of the Whigham Rattlesnake Roundup were asked why they chose rattlesnakes, they responded that it was their first idea other than a fish fry.[2]

Even when a festival commemorates an historic event, the festival itself may not be historic. In Apache Junction, Arizona, the Lost Dutchman Days festival celebrates the legend of a mysterious vanishing mine supposedly discovered in the 1880s. The festival dates only to 1965, about 15 years after the community was established.[3]

The Lost Dutchman may be a myth, but being fictitious does not stop events from inspiring a festival. Impersonators of characters from *Gomer Pyle*'s fictitious town of Mayberry appear at festivals throughout the rural South, culminating in Mayberry Days in Airy, North Carolina. Mena, Arkansas, celebrates Lum 'n' Abner Days, based on a radio show that was popular in the 1930s.[4]

Not all community festivals are recent inventions, of course, nor are they all in small towns. In Rochester, New York, the Lilac Festival has been celebrated continuously since 1902 (organizers claim 1892), drawing about 250,000 people each year.[5] San Francisco's Chinese New Year was celebrated as early as the 1860s; New Orleans's Mardi Gras is older yet. One researcher argues that the appeal of festivals is how they allow participants to belong to a community with minimal effort or commitment.[6]

Certainly there are plenty of communities vying for membership. In a single weekend in late February, people who list cooking and eating as their favorite leisure activities can choose from seven events. At the top of the food chain is the South Beach Wine and Food Festival, a Florida weekend that includes the Food Network Awards and is expected to draw 20,000 gourmets who can afford to spend upward of $1,000 on tickets. While this festival dates only to 2002, the Twin Cities Food and Wine Experience and the Newport Seafood and Wine Festival are somewhat older (13 years and 30 years, respectively) and offer more modest ticket prices.

More accessible, owing to free admission, are the Annual Clam Chowder Cook-off in Santa Cruz, California; the Grant Seafood Festival, which draws 50,000 visitors to Oregon and dates to 1996; the Parke County, Indiana, Maple Syrup Fair; and the Annual Florida Gourd Festival. This last event offers not only classes in gourding, but also free parking for recreational vehicles.[7]

Perhaps the most familiar festivals are the county fair and the state fair. The traditional county fair, with livestock exhibitions, parades, performances, and baking competitions, evolved from agricultural and employment fairs around 1811 and was widely popular before the Civil War. Although only about 20 percent of Americans live in rural areas, county fairs have staying power. Though fewer than 1 percent of the residents of San Mateo County, California, work in farming, fishing, or forestry, the county still holds its fair. Even a completely urbanized county like San Francisco sees periodic efforts to start a county fair.[8]

County fairs are held during the summer, as a precursor to the big event: the state fair, traditionally held near Labor Day weekend. As county fairs became popular, the state fair was a natural way to pit county winners against one another and to showcase the state's agricultural bounty—a powerful

means of attracting immigrants to settle the frontier states. These larger fairs require a permanent exhibition ground that is also used for other events throughout the year. The State Fair of Texas can gross $2.3 million in a single day.[9]

Most communities put more fervor into their county fair than into celebrating a federal holiday like Washington's birthday. Yet it is unlikely that anyone has ever sent a greeting card to commemorate the San Mateo County Fair. Sending holiday cards is such a thoroughly entrenched American tradition that the term *Hallmark holidays* is used to describe occasions that were reputedly invented by—or at least promoted by—major card company Hallmark to boost sales. Suspected Hallmark holidays range from Valentine's Day and Mother's Day to more obscure Sweetest Day, Secretary's Day, and Grandparents' Day.

Greeting cards and true holidays from work both became popular at about the same time, the mid-nineteenth century. Until the federal government declared four bank holidays in 1870—Independence Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day—there was no connection between a celebration and a day off from work.

While even Christmas was celebrated sporadically for years before becoming a major event, Independence Day has been widely celebrated since 1777, the year after the Declaration of Independence was signed. Bands, fireworks, parades, and picnics have been part of the celebration as far back as records go. Today, commemorating independence from Great Britain requires 150 million hotdogs, or approximately one for every two people. No one records how many sheet cakes decorated like a flag with strawberries, blueberries, and whipped cream are served, though the recipe has been a staple of women's magazines since the 1830s. It is also one of the least controversial holidays. Other than a gay rights protest in Philadelphia in 1965, there is little record of the controversies over inclusion that enliven St. Patrick's Day, the Chinese New Year, and Columbus Day.[10] Enjoying outdoor fun raises no public complaints about forgetting the meaning of the day.

For Thanksgiving, the civic meaning—thankfulness for the harvest—slipped away so gradually that little protest surrounds today's custom of serving a large meal amid a long day of watching television, notably the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade and various football games. Although the holiday reputedly dates to the Pilgrims' first harvest in 1621, and George Washington established a late November date for a day of thanksgiving in 1789, Thanksgiving was not celebrated consistently until after 1863. In 1941, the date was set as the fourth Thursday in November.

Turkey and pumpkins were considered traditional as early as 1854, but the familiar menu for the largest eating holiday of the year was defined largely

by army fare in World War II. The dinner served to soldiers in 1941 started with celery and olives, then included almost all of today's standard fare: roast turkey, sage dressing and giblet gravy, cranberry sauce, candied sweet potatoes and mashed potatoes, hot rolls, a vegetable, salad, and pumpkin pie as well as other desserts. The most crucial missing item was green bean casserole, a recipe invented for Campbell's Soup in 1955. By the early 1990s, cooking mavens were promoting nontraditional menus to spice up the day.[11] Turkey remains the centerpiece, but side dishes are where ethnic communities incorporate their own culinary traditions.

The Thanksgiving feast has become a source of stress. Turkey producer Butterball offers videos on thawing, stuffing, roasting, or barbecuing the turkey; the San Francisco *Chronicle* offers Turkey Training Camp for the worst cooks in the Bay Area. More than half of all cooks incorporate restaurant-prepared take-out items in their feast, usually side dishes or dessert, up from one-third in 2002.[12] No wonder people are ready to collapse in front of a football game.

Rest is vital, as the Friday after Thanksgiving marks the kick-off of the holiday shopping season. Although so-called Black Friday is not the heaviest shopping day of the year, the flood of shoppers into stores, along with the

Shoppers, some of whom have been shopping since 5:00 A.M., bargain hunt to grab specials on everything from toys to flat screen TVs on Black Friday, the beginning of the holiday shopping season. © AP Photo/Jeff Chiu.

popularity of door-buster bargains offered as early as 5:00 A.M., provides sufficient mayhem to justify the day's nickname.

The goal of all the shopping is Christmas: the most sentimentalized holiday of the year. While 77 percent of Americans identify as Christians, 95 percent celebrate Christmas. Americans send 1.9 billion holiday cards, cut 20.8 million trees, spend almost $32 billion in department stores alone in December, and mail 1 million packages.[13] Special holiday programming rules the television. The most famous Christmas classic, *A Charlie Brown Christmas,* mentions the birth of Christ and ends with a loosely Christian message of peace and acceptance, but most of the classic programs from the 1960s are more focused on reminding children that Christmas involves Santa Claus and that Santa brings presents.

Although there is a St. Nicholas in the Catholic pantheon, the legend that he brings presents to good children did not become popular in the United States until the early nineteenth century. Before then, it was New Year's Day, not Christmas, that was associated with presents. The vision of a St. Nick as a jolly bringer of presents who drove a reindeer-drawn sleigh and slid down the chimney to fill stockings first appears in Clement Moore's poem "The Night before Christmas" in 1823. Moore's work was part of a movement to establish a traditional holiday based loosely on customs current in Germany, where Americans believed family life was better appreciated.

The fat, jolly, fur-clad Santa Americans know is largely the creation of illustrator Thomas Nash in the 1860s. Department store Santas became common at about the same time, and now no shopping venue is complete without a jolly old elf. A skilled Santa can make up to $18,000 in the six weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas. So popular is visiting Santa that the Herald Square Macy's alone gets 1,000 visitors per hour. The magic may be more in the eyes of the parents than the children, though: one business professor observed that 82 percent of the children in one line to see Santa seemed bored. It is estimated that a full 20 percent of the people climbing on Santa's lap are adults.[14]

Believing in Santa Claus is one of the benchmarks of childlike innocence; learning that there are no flying reindeer, and that the presents come from parents, is an important, if not traumatic, rite of passage. Santa is also the sign of the so-called wars over Christmas, in which some Christians worry that greed for gifts, and concern over the sensitivities of the non-Christian minority, has taken the Christ out of Christmas. In 2005, the uproar was over Wal-Mart's decision that clerks should say *happy holidays!* instead of *merry Christmas!* By 2006, Wal-Mart was back to *merry Christmas!* Another frequent controversy is whether government agencies can sponsor nativity scenes or other displays of Christian symbols; the answer is usually no.[15]

Christmas is so pervasive that, as one rabbi noted, "This month of December is a rather difficult time for Jews."[16] American Jews have transformed Hanukah, the festival of lights that falls in December, from a minor legend to an eight-day extravaganza of parties and gifts, complete with its own silver-and-blue gift wrap. (In spiritual terms, Hanukah is far less important than Yom Kippur, the day of atonement, and Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year, both of which fall between Labor Day and Halloween.)

This shift in the importance of Hanukah brings its own controversies about how much Jews should assimilate with the Christian majority. It will be interesting to see what happens if the Hindu population of the United States continues to double each decade since the major Hindu festivals also cluster in the spring and autumn. Will some lesser Hindu legend gain prominence at midwinter? Even more complicated is the situation with Muslims, the second largest non-Christian religion in the United States, as the monthlong daytime fast of Ramadan falls during the holiday season at least every 12 years.

Attaching a holiday to Christmas has worked for Kwanzaa, the African American celebration invented by Ron Karenga in 1966. Celebrated the week after Christmas, Kwanzaa devotes one day to each of the values of unity, self-determination, collective responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose,

Santa Claus prepares before making an appearance in December. © AP Photo/ Nevada Appeal, Brad Horn.

A member of Sistahs Supporting Sistahs lights the candle of Ujima, meaning "collective work and responsibility," during a Kwanzaa celebration. © AP Photo/The Holland Sentinel, J. R. Valderas.

creativity, and faith. As the festival grows in popularity, some leaders worry that commercialism is watering down its original meaning of ethnic pride and self-respect.[17]

Perhaps the most potent rebellion against Christmas, surpassing even Adbuster's Buy Nothing Day on Black Friday, is Festivus, "the festival for the rest of us," invented by the hit television comedy *Seinfeld.* The hallmarks of Festivus are erecting a bare Festivus pole instead of a Christmas tree, airing grievances, and performing feats of strength. As quickly as it caught on, the holiday became commercialized: Ben and Jerry's launched a Festivus-themed ice cream flavor in 2000, and by 2006, manufacturers were warring over who produced the authentic Festivus pole.[18]

The last of the original four holidays is New Year's Day, or the morning after a New Year's Eve party that is supposed to include toasting the strike of midnight with champagne, kissing, and singing "Auld Lang Syne." Once day breaks, about 40 percent of Americans make New Year's resolutions, most often to stop smoking, lose weight, and "be a better person." A WTVU/Marist College poll found that at the end of 2005, 63 percent of those surveyed had kept their resolutions, though men were more likely than women to claim success.[19]

Additional federal holidays were added to the calendar gradually, then generally moved to Mondays with the Uniform Monday Holiday Act of 1968 (actually implemented in 1972). These lengthened weekends were supposed to benefit retailers, but it is doubtful that anyone predicted how thoroughly bargain shopping and minivacations would distract attention from the people being honored.

Many of these holidays were somewhat controversial in their origins. For instance, Memorial Day (originally Decoration Day) started in 1866 as a way to honor Union soldiers in the recent Civil War. The South had its own Confederate Memorial Day, most often celebrated on April 26. It has been noted that African Americans observed federal Memorial Day celebrations, while whites in the South still preferred Confederate Memorial Day.[20] Now settled on the last Monday in May, Memorial Day may be more recognized as an excellent weekend for weddings than as a day of remembrance.

Memorial Day is also often confused with Veterans Day, which honors all who fought, including the living. Like Memorial Day, Veterans Day started with a different name, Armistice Day, and a slightly different purpose: to honor those who fought in World War I, then believed to be the war to end all wars. After World War II, the day became a more general celebration for veterans. Of the approximately 24.5 million living veterans in the United States, about one-third fought in World War II, while 15 percent fought in Vietnam.[21] Although Veterans Day was among the Monday holidays defined in 1968, it has since returned to its original date of November 11. Appropriate activities for both Memorial Day and Veterans Day include decorating the graves of dead soldiers.

Labor Day, assigned to the first Monday in September, developed in the 1880s as a symbolic day of rest for the workingman. At the time, rest was controversial: even Sundays were commonly workdays. As late as 1910, labor leaders and ministers were lobbying for an eight-hour workday and a six-day workweek. Within the next decade, labor leaders adopted Labor Day as an occasion for speeches promoting unionization. Workers must have achieved some rest; by the 1930s, Labor Day had become a big day for trips to the beach.[22]

While Memorial Day has the Indy 500 race, Labor Day has the Muscular Dystrophy Association telethon, hosted by Jerry Lewis since 1966. Perhaps the temptation to stay parked in front of the television on a beautiful fall day has something to do with the reality that school traditionally starts on the day after Labor Day. The start of the school year assumes some of the character of a holiday in its own right, with the average family spending over $500 in 2006, mostly on clothing and electronics.[23]

Also born in the 1880s was the far less controversial holiday honoring the birthday of George Washington. Now celebrated on the third Monday of January and popularly believed to be a Presidents' Day that also honors Abraham Lincoln, the holiday remains officially dedicated to Washington alone. However, enthusiasm for celebrating Washington's leadership has waned substantially since 1855, when New Yorkers turned out for a parade with military bands and floats, plus speeches, songs, and fireworks. By the 1980s, the Manhattan parade had been reduced to a parochial school fife-and-drum corps and the Knights of Columbus, and most celebrating was done at Herald Square department stores.[24]

Martin Luther King Day, the newest of federal holidays, demonstrates how a holiday is pulled two ways. Celebrated on the third Monday in January, the day was added to the federal calendar in 1986 to include an African American in the official pantheon of American heroes. The day was not observed in all 50 states until 2000, when New Hampshire renamed its nine-year-old Civil Rights Day. More predictably, the last serious hold out had been South Carolina, which balanced honors for the civil rights leader by adding Confederate Memorial Day to its official state calendar.[25]

Other than public readings of King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech, there is not yet consensus on how to celebrate the holiday. Some advocate a national day of community service, described as "a day on, not a day off." It

People march in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. © AP Photo/The Fresno Bee, Christian Parley.

is still controversial when a national chain such as Catherine's, a store offering plus-sized women's clothing, holds a Martin Luther King Day sale. Is the chain trivializing the struggle for civil rights, or is it recognizing that African Americans have disposable income and corporate careers? Meanwhile, one small Florida town discovered it could improve turnout for the day's civic events by adding floats, arts and crafts, and food booths—just like other community festivals.[26]

With floats and craft booths, Martin Luther King Day may be doing better than Columbus Day, arguably a failure among federal holidays. From its origins in 1869 in San Francisco, Columbus Day was intended to celebrate Italian heritage along with the European discovery of America. The day was added to the official federal calendar in 1937. Since then, observance has lagged. Workplaces stay open; few traditions are associated with the day; the National Retail Federation does not bother to track spending. Hispanics have redefined the day as Día de la Raza, a celebration of Hispanic heritage, while South Dakota celebrates Native American Day.

This ambiguous status is a comedown from the holiday's heyday near the end of the nineteenth century. In 1892, Columbus Day was one of the holidays deemed appropriate for civic pageants: Bridgeport, Connecticut's, pageant included a reenactment of the landing of the Santa Maria, in which locals dressed as sailors and priests, and Indians dedicated the New England coast to Spain. When Columbus Day first became a state holiday in New York in 1909, celebrations included an 80,000-watcher parade up Fifth Avenue, with 300 Italian American societies participating. With Día de la Raza celebrations having taken over the Fifth Avenue parade route and Native American communities reinventing the pageant, Columbus Day seems to be mutating into a new ethnic holiday.[27]

Día de la Raza raises the question of how an ethnic celebration becomes a popular holiday. Representing the heritage of a large number of Americans helps: St. Patrick's Day, celebrated on March 17 since 1762, has a natural constituency among the 34.7 million Americans who claim Irish ancestry—more than quadruple the population of Ireland. The day calls for eating corned beef and cabbage (an American variant of a traditional Irish dish), visiting Irish pubs, and (in recent years) drinking green beer; parades are also popular. In the mid-1990s, participation in New York City's St. Patrick's Day parade was a matter of dispute as the controversial Irish nationalist organization Sinn Fein was allowed to participate, while gay and lesbian groups were not.[28]

Similarly, Cinco de Mayo can claim support from the fastest growing ethnic group in the United States: Hispanics. The day commemorates the 1862 Battle of Puebla, when an outnumbered Mexican army defeated French

Children from Ballet Folclorico Quetzalcoatl in New York celebrate Cinco de Mayo with a traditional dance. © AP Photo/Tina Fineberg.

forces. An official holiday in Mexico, the celebration of Cinco de Mayo first became popular in states along the Mexican border. Like St. Patrick's Day, Cinco de Mayo has become a bonanza for restaurants and bars; even gringos can appreciate bargain cerveza.[29]

On the other hand, Irish and Mexican are only the fourth and sixth most frequently claimed ancestries among Americans. The others in the top 10 are German, African American, English, just plain American, Italian, Polish, French, and American Indian. While Italian Americans have Columbus Day and African Americans have Martin Luther King Day, celebrations of the other dominant ethnicities remain local: an Oktoberfest here, a Bastille Day there.

Meanwhile, an ethnicity that represents less than 1 percent of the population puts on one of the biggest parties on the West Coast: Chinese New Year in San Francisco. The celebration, dating to the 1860s and held on the lunar New Year in February or early March, rivals New Year events in China and is televised worldwide. The event is so large that Southwest Airlines now sponsors it. And, like the St. Patrick's Day parade in New York, who is in and who is out is a battlefield of identity. In 2006, members of Falun Gong, a movement banned in the People's Republic of China, were barred from participating because they had allegedly broken rules by passing out literature during the 2004 event.[30]

Touching a chord in many lives may be why some festivals grow into holidays. It is hard to oppose honoring mother and father, so there are huge constituencies for celebrating Mother's Day, on the second Sunday in May, and Father's Day, on the third Sunday in June. Both holidays were products of lingering Victorian sentimentality. Anna Jarvis of Grafton, West Virginia, spearheaded Mother's Day in 1908 to honor her late mother. The same year, Grace Golden Clayton of Fairmont, West Virginia, introduced a day to honor fathers killed in a mining accident; two years later, Sonora Smart Dodd of Spokane, Washington, held an event to honor her father's devotion as a single parent. Dodd aggressively promoted the event, which was recognized by Congress in 1956 and became a permanent holiday in 1972.[31] Mother's Day had been on the calendar since 1914.

Mother's Day elicits slightly more spending than Valentine's Day, at an average of $122 per person. According to the National Retail Federation, 85 percent of buyers send greeting cards, 65 percent send flowers, and 32 percent buy gift cards. The enormous greeting card spending is still just 4 percent of annual sales, but Mother's Day is definitely the year's busiest day for phone calls. The tradition most firmly associated with the day is wearing a carnation: red for a living mother and white for a deceased one. However, this practice is an evolution from the original practice of wearing or displaying white carnations to honor all mothers, living or dead.[32]

Father's Day packs nowhere near the emotional wallop of Mother's Day. Only about 100 million cards are sent for Father's Day, versus 150 million for Mother's Day. Hallmark and American Greetings agree that funny cards outsell sentimental ones. While the National Retail Federation mourns that spending is about 20 percent lower than for Mother's Day, the National Restaurant Federation notes that Father's Day is the fourth biggest day of the year for dining out. (The others, in reverse order, are Valentine's Day, New Year's Eve, and Mother's Day.)[33]

A third holiday devoted to sentiment, St. Valentine's Day on February 14, has a cloudier history. The saint's day was established in 496 as a celebration of his martyrdom more than 200 years earlier. Not until 1493 did the legend of Valentine helping persecuted lovers appear. Why a Roman Catholic saint's day gained popular appeal in 1840s America—a time of widespread prejudice against Roman Catholics—is unclear. However, it is known that mass-produced Valentine cards found a market as early as 1847, when Esther Howland of Worcester, Massachusetts, started selling lacy, sentimental confections.[34]

Valentine's Day remains the second largest holiday for greeting card sales, after Christmas, with 190 million cards sold. About 25 percent of these cards are humorous, though 45 percent of men and 34 percent of women claim

to prefer humorous cards. In general, Valentine's Day is the second biggest retail holiday after Christmas, the stars of spending being chocolate, roses, jewelry, and dinners out. The National Confectioners Association rates Valentine's Day as fourth among holidays (Halloween is bigger), with about 36 million heart-shaped boxes of candy sold. One-third of Americans send flowers, amounting to 180 million roses and giving florists a reason to raise prices up to 30 percent in the prior week. Among bargain-seeking Wal-Mart shoppers, at least, romance burns most brightly in Mississippi (third in sales of diamonds, first in chocolates, and fifth in roses) and fizzles in Vermont.[35]

This romantic holiday is also reputedly the best time of year to catch lovers cheating. No wonder one poll found that 1 in 10 adults under age 25 feels "depressed, insecure, inadequate, or unwanted" on the day. The same poll determined that one-third of women feel indifferent toward the holiday and that two-fifths of single people feel indifferent or negative. Retailers are rushing to serve this market of the disaffected. In 2007, Altoids opened Anti-V Day shops in New York, Chicago, and Miami, while greeting card manufacturers introduced anti–Valentine's Day lines.[36]

The death of sentimentality is evident in the sudden rise of Halloween. The National Retail Federation calls it the sixth largest holiday for retail spending, worth about $5 billion in 2006, with $1.8 billion spent on costumes alone. Party City says it is the second largest holiday for decorating, trailing only Christmas, thanks to the popularity of plastic bats and faux gravestones. Two-thirds of all Americans attend Halloween parties, with participation reaching 85 percent among 18- to 24-year-olds.[37]

This is not Halloween's first appearance as a festival primarily for adults. In the 1920s, Halloween became a stylish time for high society galas, including one in 1933 that followed the first known scavenger hunt party among New York's smart set.[38] The custom of trick-or-treating at Halloween did not become commonplace until the 1940s. With widespread trick-or-treating came rumors of Halloween treats contaminated with razors, poison, or LSD. However, the Urban Legends Reference can find no documented instance of tainted food being given to children by non–family members.[39]

The popularity of Halloween has also made it more controversial. Although the Día de los Muertos has a legitimate history as a spiritual precursor to All Saint's Day on November 1, some evangelical Christians call Halloween anti-Christian because it shares the calendar with the pagan festival of Samhain. Pagans, in turn, claim the holiday is theirs and always has been. However, it is unlikely that the familiar American celebration with costumes, jack-o'-lanterns, and trick-or-treating descends from either of these traditions. One of the earliest mentions in the *New York Times* appears in 1879, in an article that acquaints the reader with the quaint fortune-telling cus-

toms of All Hallows' Eve in England. Just three years earlier, the *Times* had complained that Halloween traditions were entirely forgotten in the United States.[40] As with Christmas, current traditions are probably inventions, based only loosely on European customs.

The other popular holiday for dressing up and letting down inhibitions is Mardi Gras, the Fat Tuesday that precedes the start of Lent, which in turn leads to Easter. In New Orleans, the center of Mardi Gras fun, multiple parades full of elaborate floats, sponsored by social clubs, or *krewes,* with names like Momus and Comus, have been part of the traditional celebration since before the Civil War; women lifting their shirts for *Girls Gone Wild* videos are a newer twist on the revelry. While New Orleans saw only 350,000 visitors in 2006, the year after Hurricane Katrina devastated the city, organizers in 2007 hope for a return to numbers closer to 2005s 1.4 million.[41]

Lent—a period of prayer, fasting, and alms giving before Easter—would seem to be the last event that could attract retail sales. The major Jewish holiday of Passover, which occurs near Easter and commemorates the Jewish people's flight from slavery in Egypt into the promised land of Israel, at least requires unleavened foods that are kosher for Passover. However, the Roman Catholic requirement to eat no meat on Lenten Fridays makes this the season for restaurants to promote their fish menus. KFC has gone so far as to request that the Pope bless its new fish sandwich.[42]

Unlike Hanukah, Passover has not been transformed by proximity to a major Christian holiday: it remains an important religious festival, but advertising does not show the Easter Bunny showing up for the seder. Kosher grocery stores currently do about 45 percent of their annual business at Passover (like Easter, it is a holiday that brings out less observant believers), though they are facing increased competition from mainstream grocery stores trying to reach a Jewish market. For those who dread cleaning every corner of the house to purify it (or seeing their relatives at the ritual dinner), resorts now offer vacation packages that promise to comply with the complex dietary rules of the season.[43]

Meanwhile, Christians celebrate Easter by buying $2 billion in candy, including 1 billion Peeps marshmallow chicks and bunnies, 16 billion jelly beans, and 90 billion chocolate rabbits (most of which will have their ears eaten first).[44] The candy goes into an Easter basket, the traditional reward to children for finding decorated eggs that their parents have hidden on behalf of the Easter Bunny. Although it is now popular to trace the Easter Bunny to pagan customs, the rabbit and the egg hunt were popularized in America in the mid-nineteenth century as part of a fashion for family-focused German customs. These particular customs first appear in German sources after the Protestant Reformation.

The connection between Jesus and colored eggs remains so unclear that some cities have renamed their annual egg hunts to remove references to Easter, though the juxtaposition of egg hunt, church service, and elaborate luncheon remains customary. Of the major holidays, Easter has the least firmly established menu, though spiral-cut hams outpace candy in dollars spent. It is also a holiday that gains appeal from occurring variously from late March to late in April, so that it becomes an occasion for showing off new spring clothes.[45]

The most clothing-oriented celebration is neither Easter nor even Halloween. On few occasions will a typical woman spend as much on a dress as she does for her wedding gown, with an average price of over $1,000. Post–World War II prosperity started weddings' growth to a personalized festival far larger than Christmas and requiring over a year to plan. Each year, almost 2.3 million American couples plan a formal wedding, at an average cost of $26,800, resulting in an industry worth $7.9 billion.[46] While a white gown and veil for the bride remain standard, the wedding ceremony has become more individualized and complex, with couples writing their own vows, lighting a unity candle to honor their families, asking their attendants to read poems or sing, and offering family medallions to children from earlier marriages. A large wedding can expand to fill the entire weekend, with a bridesmaids' lunch, rehearsal dinner, and bachelor party before the big day, a formal reception and dance following the ceremony, and a present-opening brunch on the day after.

Other rites of passage have exhibited the same expansion. One Boston writer commented that lamenting materialism is as much a Jewish bar mitzvah tradition as holding a lavish party after the religious ceremony. Both the ceremony, in which a boy of about 13 is admitted to manhood and reads from holy scripture in front of the synagogue, and the subsequent party did not become widespread in the United States until the 1970s. Peculiarly, for a ritual that was meant to apply only to males, the popularity of the bar mitzvah may have increased as Jewish feminists promoted a parallel ceremony for their daughters.[47]

The Christian ceremony of confirmation, held by Roman Catholics at about the same age as the bar mitzvah, receives a far less lavish treatment. The closest equivalent is the Hispanic *quinceañera,* or 15th-birthday celebration, which calls for elaborate ball gowns, a mass, and a dance. With a typical cost between $5,000 and $10,000, the "quince" is not quite as grand as a wedding. However, the similarity to weddings is obvious to mass-retailer David's Bridal, which markets *quinceañera* gowns; and just as it is possible to have a combined wedding and honeymoon at an exotic location, it is possible to celebrate the *quinceañera* on a seven-day cruise. There is even a magazine

for girls planning their quinces. Although the party has a long history in Latin America, it became widely popular in the United States only with a larger cultural shift to embracing ethnic traditions, rather than attempting to Americanize those rituals away.[48]

The 1990s also saw the growth of the kiddie birthday party from a cake, balloons, and pin the tail on the donkey to extravaganzas with clowns, rented zoo animals, elaborate favors, and guest lists of 50 or more. Parents in the San Francisco Bay area call elaborate birthday parties "a fundamental rite of passage." Meanwhile, in Minnesota, the parents behind Birthdays without Pressure are trying to "launch a local and national conversation" about how children's parties are out of control.[49]

Leisure

Self-indulgence may have become the theme of today's leisure activities, compared to past generations' interest in community participation and useful hobbies. In his widely discussed best seller *Bowling Alone,* Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam lamented how Americans give less time to civic activism, church, clubs, and even playing bridge or pinochle. In fairness, card games remain a monthly activity for about 3.9 percent of Americans, though the survey does not disclose whether the game was solitaire. Certainly the two most popular leisure pastimes—dining out and watching television—make no one's list of character-building activities.[50]

Building character has been a justification for play as far back as the seventeenth century. Puritan clerics recommended sports that could refresh the spirit but warned against games that might lead to gambling, drinking, and idleness. Of the activities that at least 1.5 percent of Americans enjoy once a month, few would have won approval in colonial Salem. Along with dining out and playing cards, the top activities include entertaining at home, barbecuing, baking, cooking, going to bars, going to the beach, going to live theater, playing board games, photography, scrapbooking, and reading books. Just over a century ago, a similar propensity for sedentary activities led Theodore Roosevelt to urge Americans to take up football and big game hunting to "develop the rougher, manlier traits of their character."[51]

Americans took up football—from the stands. Football's popularity as a spectator sport is almost unrivaled. From 1990 to 2005, attendance at professional and college football games grew 23 percent, pushing it ahead of its traditional rivals, baseball and basketball. Football is the most watched sport on television, making the average professional team worth $898 million, compared to just $376 million for the average baseball team and $353 million for the average basketball team. Thanks to its popularity and its large

squads, football is also the men's college sport that fields the most players. However, tackle football and its gentler variant, touch football, rank only 25 and 24 among the most popular participation sports among Americans as a whole, and more than two-thirds of the players are college-age or younger. By the time Americans get into their fifties, they overwhelmingly prefer walking, fishing, swimming, and golf.[52]

Each of the big three sports represents a distinct aspect of American character. Baseball's hotdogs and hot July nights, with the game played under the sky in an old-style brick stadium and on real grass, summons nostalgia for a simpler, quieter, slower time—appropriate for a sport that evolved from cricket before the Civil War. Basketball, which was invented for play in the ghettos of Chicago in 1891, expresses the lightning-fast pace of urban life and the egalitarian ideals of a nation of immigrants. And football, which rose to dominate homecoming games in the 1920s and became a television phenomenon in the 1960s, epitomizes the United States' movement into being a superpower. By the time Joe Namath led the New York Jets to victory in the third Super Bowl in 1969, President Nixon was talking football in campaign speeches to the silent majority as part of his message that America should be number one.[53]

The drive to be number one has resulted in concerns about brutal play ever since football developed from rugby in Ivy League colleges in the 1870s. Even Theodore Roosevelt called for reforms, a movement that led in 1905 to the founding of the organization that is now the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). College play has also suffered under criticism that the national title is mythical or arbitrary because the teams with the top records are not pitted against one another in a single championship game, thanks to a system of ranking teams based on votes. Modifications to the bowl system, which has matched highly regarded teams on New Year's Day since the first Rose Bowl in 1902, have resulted in a championship game played on the second weekend in January, but there are still criticisms that top teams are excluded.

In professional football, superiority is more clear-cut. Being number one means winning the Super Bowl, in which the winners of the National Football Conference and American Football Conference face off. Super Bowl Sunday, in late January or early February, has become a de facto national holiday. The only bigger day for food consumption is Thanksgiving; the only program to beat the 2006 Super Bowl for total viewers is the 1983 finale of *M*A*S*H*. *Forbes* calls the Super Bowl the most valuable brand in the United States, possibly because people tune in as much for the innovative commercials as for the play. A 30-second commercial spot cost $2.6 million in 2007.[54] The major advertiser is usually Anheuser-Busch, an appropriate choice for a day

when traditional party menus feature beer, chicken wings, pizza, chips, and guacamole.

That water systems break during halftime as everyone flushes simultaneously is an urban legend.[55] Producers of the halftime show do their utmost to hold viewers. Since 1992, marching bands have been supplanted by celebrities such as Gloria Estefan, Diana Ross, Stevie Wonder, Paul McCartney, Britney Spears, the Rolling Stones, Prince, and (most infamously) Justin Timberlake and Janet Jackson. Jackson's so-called wardrobe malfunction, when Timberlake's playful tug on her bustier revealed her entire breast, resonated so strongly in popular culture that it led the Federal Communications Commission to crack down on nudity in soap operas. The incident also resulted in a $550,000 fine for CBS, the network that broadcast the 2004 Super Bowl.[56]

No one worries about excess flushing during Major League Baseball's World Series. A best-of-seven-game series simply does not generate the same passion as an all-or-nothing contest, and the television ratings show it. Since the early 1990s, viewers have slumped from an average of about 20 million households to fewer than 10 million households. The 2004 series between the Boston Red Sox and the St. Louis Cardinals temporarily reversed the trend, but the 2005 and 2006 series set new record lows.[57]

The secret is that watching baseball is less a pastime than a lifestyle. One type of hardcore fan is devoted to sabremetrics, the science of statistical analysis of at-bats, home runs, and pitch count. This interest in numbers means that while hitting a game-winning home run at the bottom of the ninth inning, with the bases loaded and two outs, *will* earn a player momentary glory, the lasting heroes are the ones who post numeric records such as Hank Aaron (most home runs over his entire career, at 755) and Cy Young (most career wins as a pitcher, at 511). The true sabremetrician is equally delighted by more esoteric records, such as the left-handed hitter whose ground balls led to the most double plays in a single season (Ben Grieve of the Oakland A's).[58]

A second type of fan attends minor league games, sometimes with so much enthusiasm that a minor league team like the Durham Bulls can draw over 300,000 fans each year and fill a snazzy new ballpark. A third type of fan turns out, 2.8 million strong, for spring training in Florida and Arizona, where the more intimate setting makes it easier to get autographs from favorite players. Some fans fear that as Cactus league stadiums ramp up concessions and events to attract more spectators, ticket prices will skyrocket, and the sense of a special time outside the professional season will collapse.[59]

A fourth type of fan cherishes the ballparks for their own sake, possibly making a project of seeing a game at every major and minor league ballpark. Even casual fans love ballparks: Americans' 150 favorite buildings include

four traditional-style ballparks (Wrigley Field, number 31; the original Yankee Stadium, number 84; retro-style AT&T Park in San Francisco, number 104; and Fenway Park, number 113), but just one multipurpose sports center (the Astrodome, number 134).[60]

While baseball's grass and sunshine give it a suburban feel even in the middle of a city, basketball is relentlessly urban, from its asphalt courts to its origins as a low-cost way to keep working-class youth out of trouble. Playing baseball is part of an idyllic childhood, with 2.6 million kids participating in Little League, but the romance of pick-up basketball appeals more to teenagers and adults.[61] And just as Chicago gave birth to the game, it is also the origin of the Harlem Globetrotters, the African American team that amazed Americans with its stunt-filled exhibition play from 1927 until long after basketball had been integrated, even spawning a Saturday morning cartoon in the early 1970s.

In becoming a big-league industry, basketball remains the most egalitarian of the big three sports, offering more opportunities to African Americans and women than either football or baseball. Professional football banned African American players from 1933 to 1946, integrating only when the managers of the new Los Angeles stadium insisted, and then only with two players. Though 65 percent of NFL players are African American, there is some evidence that African American players are shunted into roles that rely more on athleticism than on strategy.[62]

Baseball confined African Americans to the so-called Negro League until 1947, when Jackie Robinson was assigned to the Brooklyn Dodgers; as late as 1959, there was an unintegrated team, and not one Negro League player appears on the All Century Team of the 100 greatest players. Since 1975, the proportion of African American players in Major League Baseball has dropped from 27 to 9 percent—fewer than the proportion of players from the Dominican Republic.[63] Professional basketball, by contrast, permitted African Americans to play in 1942 and integrated with 10 players.[64]

Both professional football and professional basketball have been good for colleges because National Football League and National Basketball Association (NBA) rules forbid recruiting players straight out of high school. Fielding a team gives alumni a chance to watch the next Joe Namath or Michael Jordan. In turn, football and basketball open doors for young African Americans to attend prestigious universities. This situation encompasses controversies: African American student-athletes graduate at a lower rate than white student-athletes but at a higher rate than African American students as a whole, and there are questions about how standards are applied to male student-athletes.[65] There is no question that basketball seems to incite the strongest loyalties at the college level: while professional basketball has stars,

college basketball has decade-long rivalries. Matchups between traditional enemies, such as Duke versus the University of North Carolina, help assure that the men's NCAA championship tournament, nicknamed "March Madness," earns television ratings higher than the NBA championship.[66]

Basketball is also more hospitable to women than football or baseball. Despite the influence of Title IX federal civil rights legislation in directing resources to girls' and women's athletics since 1972, there is no NCAA women's football, and women's professional leagues struggle for recognition. Although there are four serious national women's football leagues, the only women's game that rated a mention during 2007 Super Bowl commentary was the Lingerie Bowl, a novelty event featuring models playing in shorts and sports bras.[67]

Baseball gained a more woman-friendly reputation with the 1992 release of *A League of Their Own,* the movie that raised awareness of the All-American Girls' Baseball League (AAGBL) that was popular during World War II. While the AAGBL drew crowds of over 500,000 in a good season, only in their last years did they play true baseball, rather than a cross between baseball and softball. Women are still encouraged to play softball, which uses a larger ball, a shorter bat, a smaller ballpark, and modified rules. Even so, women are enthusiastic about hitting a ball with a bat: the fourth largest number of female college players is in softball, behind soccer, outdoor track, and indoor track.

While basketball is only the fifth most popular sport among college women, it is the hands-down winner among televised women's college sports and women's professional sports. Basketball is the "exploding revenue generator," driving ESPN's $200 million, 11-year deal to televise women's college sports. The professional league, the Women's National Basketball Association, struggles with declining in-person attendance (though television viewership of championship finals was up 33 percent from 2005 to 2006), but has at least managed to outlast the Women's Professional Softball League and the Women's United Soccer Association.[68]

Outside the big three, favorite spectator sports and favorite college sports diverge. Colleges favor sports that require little expensive equipment, so soccer, track, cross-country running, and swimming all appear in the top 10 NCAA sports for both men and women. Of these sports, only soccer lures more than 1 percent of Americans to games at least once a month. Since two-thirds of soccer players are under age 18, the odds are good that many people at games are the middle-class, suburban soccer moms targeted by Bill Clinton in his 1992 presidential campaign.

Track and field events elicit widespread fan interest mostly in Summer Olympics years, particularly when a telegenic athlete sets new records, as Florence Griffith-Joyner and her sister-in-law Jackie Joyner-Kersee did in the

Detroit Shocker's Cheryl Ford holds up her MVP trophy. Beside her is WNBA president Donna Orenda. © AP Photo/Gerald Herbert.

1980s. Similarly, bringing attention to swimming requires, if not a Mark Spitz with seven gold medals and seven world records in the 1972 Olympics, at least a Gary Hall Jr., with 10 medals in three Olympics, a famous family, and a penchant for strutting and shadowboxing.

The cultural importance of a sport is not, however, necessarily tied to its attendance. More Americans regularly watch horseracing than ice hockey, but hockey joins football, basketball, and baseball as the sports where having a major league team is one mark of being a world-class city. Hockey's narrow audience is the result of geography: at the college level, it is played in only 38 states, and most of the players come from Minnesota or Canada. Since 1990, when San Jose was granted a team, professional hockey has followed job migration into the Sunbelt. Civic pride and displaced midwesterners fill local arenas, but hockey struggles with television ratings; the average hockey team is worth only $180 million, about half the value of a baseball or basketball team.[69]

The sport that people are actually attending—and watching on television—is the races sponsored by the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR). NASCAR is the second most watched sport on television, after football, and claims one-third of Americans as fans. About 2.5 million Amer-

icans go to the races at least once a month, even though auto racing tracks are even less widely accessible than hockey rinks. For corporate sponsorship, NASCAR roars past football, with $1.5 billion in sponsors.[70] With motors alone costing $40,000 each, and a team using two or more motors every weekend, the need for big corporate money is obvious. Happily, NASCAR fans have a reputation for being intensely loyal to brands that sponsor cars and races.

Despite its reputation for beer-swilling, Confederate-flag-waving, redneck antics, NASCAR owes its importance in American sports to its clean-cut, family-friendly, Christian image. More women watch NASCAR on television than football or baseball, and one ESPN survey estimates that 42 percent of total fans are women.[71] NASCAR is unique among the major sports in that women compete alongside men, rather than in separate leagues, though women drivers remain few, and none has ever won a major race nor gained the fame of Indy racer Danica Patrick.

What distinguishes Indy from NASCAR is the cars: Indy racing uses open-wheel, rear-engine cars, while NASCAR racers drive stock Fords and Chevys, modified to handle the demands of 500-mile drives at over 200 miles per hour. The difference in cars parallels the distinct origins of the two sports. The most famous Indy race, the Indianapolis 500, dates back to 1911 and

NASCAR beats out baseball and basketball as one of America's most popular sports. Courtesy of Photofest.

has its origins in owner Carl Fisher's passion for designing cars for speed. NASCAR developed out of a popular pastime in the prosperous years after World War II, when men would turn out at local dirt tracks to race the family car. Thanks to interest in Patrick, the 2006 Indy 500 showed a respectable upswing in television ratings, though it still ate the exhaust of NASCAR's Coca-Cola 600.[72]

In its spectacle of hard-jawed, laconic heroes who harness horsepower to their will, NASCAR resembles an older, but equally rural, sport: rodeo. Focused on demonstrating skills at roping cattle and breaking broncos, rodeo developed from the real chores of ranch hands in the American West, almost died with the closing of the frontier, then was revived in the 1920s by entrepreneurs who sensed a market for nostalgia for a simpler time. Today, rodeo's most popular event is bull riding, billed as the world's most dangerous sport. Women compete only in barrel racing, which involves guiding a horse through tight turns along a preset course. Rodeo is big enough to play Las Vegas, which credits its annual National Finals Rodeo with bringing $50 million to the community, comparing favorably to the $85 million generated by the local NASCAR weekend.[73]

NASCAR and basketball are not the only sports to show upward mobility as events to watch. Professional boxing, a rough-edged bachelor pastime in the late nineteenth century, turned all-American in the 1960s. The figure who looms largest is heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali, whose popularity survived his conversion to Islam and his refusal to be drafted in the Vietnam War. His fight against underdog Chuck Wepner inspired the 1976 movie *Rocky,* which is one of only two films about American sports to win an Oscar for Best Picture. (The other winner is a movie about a female boxer, *Million Dollar Baby.*)

Despite his controversial beliefs and flamboyant lifestyle, Ali became an icon of American sportsmanship, paving the way for bad boy star athletes like boxer Mike Tyson, basketball player Charles Barkley, and skier Bode Miller. In retirement, Ali has been heaped with honors, including Sports Illustrated's Athlete of the Century in 1999, a Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2005, and a Nobel Peace Prize nomination in 2007.[74] In Ali's gloves, boxing became so respectable that for sheer down-market brutality, it is necessary to turn to the professional wrestling mania of the mid-1980s, when matches that were more soap opera than sport made stars of Hulk Hogan and future Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura.

Conversely, tennis and golf have tried to shed their image as sports for the country club set, hoping to increase revenues by broadening their appeal. Among participants, the country club image sticks: half of the players boast household incomes of $75,000 or higher. While wealthier Americans gener-

ally participate in sports at a higher rate, the most affluent families represent only about one-third of billiard players, bowlers, or hikers.

Some top players of the past, such as Billie Jean King, who started the first women's professional tennis tour and was the first woman to be *Sports Illustrated*'s Sportsperson of the Year, learned to play on public courts, not at the country club.[75] So did the first African American tennis stars, including activist Arthur Ashe. But the icons of upward mobility through tennis are sisters Serena and Venus Williams, whose parents groomed them to be professional players as a path out of the slums of Compton.

Part of the Williams' magic is how young they burst into the top ranks of professional tennis, winning their first open tournaments in their late teens. Similarly, a part African American child prodigy, Tiger Woods, is credited with broadening interest in golf. Woods started winning amateur matches at age eight and won the Masters by age 22, making him the youngest ever winner as well as the only Masters winner of African American or Asian descent.

However, if Venus Williams's five Grand Slam singles titles, Serena Williams's eight Grand Slam singles titles, or Tiger Woods's 12 major professional golf championships have increased youth interest in tennis or golf, the effect is not dramatic. The National Sporting Goods Association reports that between 1995 and 2005, the number of 12- to 17-year-old tennis players fell just 1.5 percent, compared to 11.5 percent for all ages. The number of golf players in the same age group grew 7.4 percent, notably more than the 3 percent in the general population.[76]

Young people from ages 7 to 17 are losing interest in traditional team sports, with the possible exception of ice hockey and soccer. Even basketball and bicycle riding, which involve more than 7 million teenagers each, attract fewer participants than they once did. The growth sports are skateboarding, snowboarding, and (only among the age 7–11 set) alpine skiing. Participation in skiing may be the result of ski resorts doing more to attract families, but the growing appeal of skateboarding and snowboarding are surely tied to the sports' extreme reputations. Unlike older sports that reward teamwork or sheer speed, skateboarding and snowboarding include competitions that emphasize showmanship in performing complex stunts. The tension between speed and style was bitterly demonstrated at the 2006 Winter Olympics, when Lindsay Jacobellis lost her commanding lead in the snowboard cross event because she inserted a trick into a high-speed run—and wiped out.[77]

The not-so-young prefer gentler sports, with walking, camping, swimming, exercising with equipment, bowling, net fishing, bicycle riding, freshwater fishing, billiards, and aerobic exercise leading the pack. Despite numerous studies showing that Americans are getting fatter, health clubs are a $15.9 billion

U.S. snowboarder Shaun White won several gold medals during the 2006 Winter Olympic games. © AP Photo/Lionel Cironneau.

industry, with over 41 million members. The International Health, Racquet, and Sportsclub Association estimates that about 15 percent of Americans belong to a health club; membership increased 17 percent from 1995 to 2005. The number of members who work out frequently has doubled since the mid-1990s. For affluent professionals, the health club may be replacing the country club, as half of all health club members have a household income greater than $75,000. Clubs keep their revenues up by exploiting trends like Pilates, the yoga-like stretching exercises that burst into popularity in 2002, with participation increasing 96 percent in a single year.[78]

Passion for sports is not limited to traditional athletes. Athletes with physical challenges, such as cerebral palsy, limited vision, or amputations, compete in the Paralympics, which follow the Olympics in the same venue. Attempts to include athletes with intellectual disabilities in the Paralympics have generated controversy; these athletes are more likely to compete in the Special Olympics. First developed in 1968 in Chicago by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, whose sister Rosemary may have been intellectually disabled, the Special Olympics now serves about 550,000 athletes in the United States, competing internationally in 30 sports. Unsurprisingly, given the American belief that sports build character, one of the Special Olympics' official goals is

to increase respect for people with intellectual disabilities by displaying their ability to succeed on the playing field.[79]

Among ordinary Americans, the favorite sports that do not take place at the gym tend to take place in parks. Interest in developing parks started around 1838, when the rural cemetery movement remade the outdoors as a place to picnic while musing on eternal values. The first major noncemetery park project, New York's Central Park, developed in 1858, was widely copied in other major cities. By the end of the nineteenth century, Chicago had become the home of a populist drive for play parks, or smaller urban parks where working-class youth could work off their excess energy. Since the 1920s, play parks have been a routine part of new suburban developments, only recently supplemented by hiking trails.

The original impetus for developing state and national parks was less access to recreation than awe of the grandeur of the untamed West. The first national park was founded in 1872 to preserve the area known as Yellowstone and its spectacular geysers; it was designated a national park because the area crossed the boundary of Wyoming into Montana and Idaho. Of the 33 national parks defined before 1916, all but 4 are in the 11 western states.

The popularity of motor travel spurred growth in the number of national parks after World War II, as a camping trip made an affordable and potentially educational family vacation. As of 2007, there are 390 national parks. The system has been extended beyond natural wonders and campgrounds to include historic sites as well as urban areas such as the Golden Gate National Parks in San Francisco. Visitors surpassed 285 million in 1999, the last year for which the National Park Service provides statistics.[80]

State park systems also provide recreational facilities. Although Indian Springs in Georgia has existed since 1825, making it the oldest state park, most state park systems had their growth spurt in the 1930s, with the help of the Civilian Conservation Corps. For sheer size, the winner is Alaska, boasting 3.2 million acres of park system.[81]

The domesticated cousin of the state park is the amusement park, once a raucous and slightly unsavory scene of rickety rides, bathing beauties, and bearded ladies. Today's family-friendly amusement park was invented by Walt Disney in 1955, with the opening of Disneyland amid the orange groves of Anaheim, California. More than 515 million people have visited Disneyland since it opened. The second Disney park, Disneyworld in Florida, is the largest single-site employer in the nation. The Disney vision is so popular that the company was able to populate an experimental new urbanist community in Celebration with people who were eager to live at Disneyworld.[82]

Much of the appeal of Disneyland and Disneyworld is the opportunity to participate in a fantasy, whether of small-town America on Main Street USA

or of the future in Tomorrowland. Some people take their fantasies further. Over 2 million Americans participate in more than 180 Renaissance Faires each year, dressing in the garb of the Middle Ages and reenacting jousts, feasts, and revels.[83] Another popular fantasy is reenacting battles, particularly from the Civil War; participants claim that this is one of the fastest-growing pastimes in the United States.[84]

War takes place on the tabletop, too. While simulations of battles have been used as a way to teach strategy all the way back to the invention of chess, recreating battles on a playing board or an elaborate tablescape started a rise in popularity in the 1970s, about the same time that role-playing games like Dungeons and Dragons became widespread.[85]

Perhaps surprisingly, board games and card games are holding their own against video games. Board games sales increased 18 percent in 2005, possibly because these games offer a quiet way for 20-somethings to gather for fun.[86] The most quintessentially American board game must be Monopoly, the real investment game that is played worldwide and includes sanctioned state and national tournaments. While classic games like Clue (solve a murder), Risk (invade Russia), and Trivial Pursuit (answer questions on pop culture) originated outside the United States, Americans can take credit for inventing the crossword-style game of Scrabble and the iconic game for small children, Hungry Hungry Hippos. Scrabble games are found in one-third of all American homes, and its competitiveness has grown to a scale similar to that of chess, complete with international tournaments and books on how to master advanced strategy.[87]

The most American of card games is probably poker, played in numerous variants since it appeared in the 1820s in New Orleans. Movies about the Old West are as incomplete without poker games as they are without horses and shoot-outs, and ability to maintain an expressionless poker face while bluffing about one's hand is a test of a strong, silent man. A championship tournament like the World Series of Poker can pay over $7 million to the winner. Televised tournaments have become quite popular. The importance of silence over interaction also makes poker ideal for online play.[88]

Not all tabletop games are taken seriously. Bingo, once the territory of blue-haired ladies down in the church social room, is enjoying a resurgence as a campy, kitschy game for younger people, particularly at gay bars. There is online bingo, too, a $710 million industry, where only 10 percent of the players are over 55, and 28 percent are under 34.[89]

Gaming is more serious business for Native American tribes, who have been permitted by the U.S. government to run casinos since the 1988 passage of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act. In 2006, 387 casinos generated over $25 billion in revenue. Foxwoods, operated by the Mashantucket

Pequot Tribal Nation of Connecticut, is the largest casino in the world, boasting 100 poker tables, over 7,000 slot machines, and more than 40,000 guests each year. However, Indian gaming tends to benefit a handful of tribes, some of which applied to be recognized by the government in order to operate casinos: in 2002, just 13 percent of casinos, largely in states with few Native Americans, generated 66 percent of total Indian gaming revenue.

The gaming trail always leads back to the computer because electronic games have been popular since the heyday of arcade video games in the early 1980s, when Americans spent 75,000 man-hours playing. People still play Pong, the ping-pong-like game from 1972 that was the first arcade game to be widely successful; it also was the defining game of the first home gaming units in 1977. This success was followed by Space Invaders, the iconic shoot-the-aliens game, but it was Pac-Man, released in 1980, that truly captured the popular imagination. More than 100,000 machines were sold in the United States, followed by 30 licensed versions of the game and multiple sequels; Pac-Man even appears as a guest character in unrelated games. Pac-Man inspired an eponymous Saturday morning cartoon and a board game, along with a controversy when President Ronald Reagan sent a congratulatory letter to eight-year-old Jeffrey Yee for a Pac-Man score that many players deemed impossible to achieve. Pac-Man is still in play, now on fifth-generation iPods.[90]

Today's home gaming systems, which feature more realistic graphics, can be counted on to be among the year's hot Christmas gifts when a new version is released. In 2006, Sony's Playstation (PS) 3 was so heavily in demand that online auction giant eBay had to restrict sales to established sellers to decrease fraud. Even so, more than 3,000 PS3s were listed two days before the official launch, with bidders offering over $2,000 for a gaming system that would sell for $600. The launch of the competing Nintendo Wii, later in the same week, excited similar passion.[91]

More realistic graphics have led to more realistic violence. The flagship for complaints about promoting bad values is the Grand Theft Auto (GTA) series, in which players roam a major city and earn points for committing crimes. Grand Theft Auto: Vice City, in a setting loosely based on 1980s Miami, has the distinction of inspired complaints from Cuban and Haitian immigrants for racism, two lawsuits claiming the game caused teenagers to commit crimes, and an episode of *CSI: Miami.* The game is so widely recognizable that Coca-Cola's 2007 Super Bowl campaign featured a GTA-style character spreading sweetness, light, and Coke as he passed through a city.[92]

The next step from realism is an alternate reality, initially defined by the world-building computer game Sim City in 1989, which was followed by a dozen variants, including The Sims, the best-selling game for personal com-

puters. While Sim City was about building and managing a metropolis, The Sims offered players the opportunity to live an alternate life.[93] But a true alternative life requires joining the online Second Life, a virtual world inspired by Neal Stephenson's novel *Snow Crash.* A rush of media attention in late 2006 brought 4 million accounts to Second Life, though economic statistics suggest that the number of active participants is closer to 450,000, with about 230,000 active enough to spend fictional Linden dollars. Because Linden dollars can be converted to normal U.S. currency, it is possible to make a real fortune in the virtual world: Ansche Chung of China was the first person to make $1 million from deals in Second Life.[94]

More hands-on hobbies include collecting, cooking, gardening, handicrafts like knitting or embroidery, and model-building pursuits such as train layouts, rocketry, or dollhouses. Not all building hobbies are miniaturized: the number of experimental home-built full-sized aircraft registered with the Federal Aviation Administration has been increasing by 1,000 a year for 15 years, surpassing 28,000 in 2007.[95]

Many hobbies evolved from handicrafts, such as sewing and building, that were useful on the frontier, but the heyday of hands-on hobbies occurred in the years immediately following World War II, when experts recommended hobbies as a way of coping with excess leisure. Although hands-on hobbies

Grand Theft Auto is one of many popular, yet controversial video games. © AP Photo/Paul Sakuma.

struggle to attract a generation accustomed to video games, gracious-living guru Martha Stewart is credited with making pastimes like needlework and cake decorating respectable for middle-class women with professional careers. Easily the most popular of the feminine hobbies is scrapbooking, which transforms a basic photo album into an elaborate production of patterned papers, crops (ways to cut photos), die cuts (paper shapes used as decoration), stickers, ribbon, and colored ink. Since its inception in 1995, scrapbooking has grown into a $2.55 billion industry, with over 32 million participants.[96]

The popularity of scrapbooking may be fueled by the rise of more elaborate celebrations, which may in turn be related to how access to leisure has changed. Trends over the past four decades indicate that the people with the lowest-paid jobs saw the greatest gains in leisure, while the upper middle class are working more hours. So the people who have time do not have money, and the people who have money do not have time.[97] Bigger parties, with more lavish entertainment plus constant photography and videotaping, may be trying to pack a month's worth of fun and a year's worth of memories into a few hours' worth of party. Work hard; play hard. That is the American way.

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5

Cuisine and Fashion

Benjamin F. Shearer

American Cuisine

> We are barely beginning to sift down our own cuisine.
>
> —Charles Beard

"Let's grab a bite to eat." This typical American expression suggests a host of unsavory connotations. Children are chastised for grabbing. There is a sense of lawlessness and a certain impropriety about grabbing things. Grabbing is not polite, but millions of Americans are grabbing a bite to eat every day. Grabbing is what is done on the run. There is a kind of national fast food cuisine to cater to all these people on the run, but fast food is just part of the story. Contrary to their portrayals in film, Americans are not always running. In fact, their expenditures on fast food are a relatively small portion of their total food expenditures.

The same transportation and food handling systems that helped to create a national fast food cuisine have also blurred the lines among regional cuisines. It is not at all unusual for Maine lobsters to be served in restaurants in California or Rhode Island quahogs to show up in chowder in Arizona. Traditional American cuisine is, however, regional, based on what is available. It is differentiated generally by method—frying in the South and boiling in New England—and by national origin. The Germans and the English had the biggest effect on the development of American cooking because they represented the largest groups of America's first immigrants. It should not be forgotten, however, that the United States began its existence as 13 English

colonies inhabited mostly by English men and women who brought their taste for English cooking with them. The development of the jambalaya that became called American food can be seen, therefore, as a gradual liberation from simple English home cooking, decried by visitors to England for centuries as an abomination, a tradition kept alive today by French presidents. Midwest cuisine is based heavily on the movement and settlement first of Germans and then Scandinavians. Southern cuisine is inextricably mixed with the legacy of slavery, as black slaves over time turned high-table English plantation cooking into flavorful dishes no longer English or African, but completely American. Southwestern cuisine can no longer be broken down into its component native Indian, Mexican, Spanish, and Anglo components. California, with its incredible ethnic diversity, has developed a regional cuisine that is consciously based on fusing the culinary arts of various cultures with locally produced goods. The Pacific Northwest is a developing cuisine but is most certainly based on regionally available fresh food.

"That's American as apple pie." This often heard American expression is meant to refer to anything an American thinks is really American, like an old Ford truck or Bing Crosby singing "White Christmas." The fact is, of course, that apple pie is not American at all. Recipes for apple pies showed up in Elizabethan England and were even stowed away on the ships bringing the first colonists to American shores. Typically, apple pies became so ubiquitous that Americans appropriated them as their own. To most Americans, apple pie is a national emblem of American cuisine. Yet in spite of the American preoccupation with uniformity in food—a Big Mac is a Big Mac in Boston, Kansas City, and Los Angeles—even apple pies are susceptible to regional variation. Germans and Amish in Pennsylvania may toss in some sour cream and raisins or ice the top pastry layer. In Massachusetts, some cranberries may find themselves baked with the apples. Apple chiffon pie is popular in upstate New York. In Illinois, apples and pumpkin might be pureed together in a pie. An old California recipe cooked the apples first and laid them on a bed of caramel sauce before baking.

The case of the lowly bean illustrates even better the regional nature of American cuisine. Beans, no matter the variety, have always been a staple in American diets. Boston has proudly accepted the appellation "Bean Town" since the 1700s thanks to its great northern baked beans flavored with brown sugar and molasses. In south Texas, however, barbequed baked pink beans get spiced up with chilies. In Vermont, baked navy beans get a treatment of apples and maple syrup. Hoppin' John in the southern Low Country pairs rice with black-eyed peas and ham. In the Southwest, Pueblo Indians combined chorizos, a legacy of Spain, beef, hot peppers, cumin, corn, and tomatoes with Anasazi beans for a local delicacy.[1]

So what does it mean to have an American meal? There is no recipe for cooking the American way. American cooking, like American life, is an individual effort in which innovation and efficiency are prized. Quite simply, American food is what Americans cook and eat. It is food appropriated from the cultures of the people who lived or came there and, in most all cases, changed to fit local circumstance, taste, and the means of mass production.

Eating and Drinking in America

In 2002, each American ate (per capita consumption) 64.5 pounds of beef, 48.2 pounds of pork, 56.8 pounds of chicken, 15.6 pounds of fish and shellfish, 180 eggs, 885.3l pounds of dairy products, 30.5 pounds of cheese (topped by American at 12.8 pounds, followed by Italian at 12.4 pounds), 26.4 pounds of frozen dairy products, 191.3 pounds of flour and cereal products, 63.2 pounds of sugar, 125.6 pounds of fresh fruit and 146.0 pounds of processed fruit, 193.4 pounds of fresh vegetables (potatoes in first place at 45.0 pounds, and lettuce in second place at 22.4 pounds), and 208.6 pounds of processed vegetables. Americans also per capita drank 23.6 gallons of coffee, 7.8 gallons of tea, 21.9 gallons of milk, 8.0 gallons of fruit juice, 21.8 gallons of beer, 2.1 gallons of wine, and 1.3 gallons of distilled liquor.[2]

Food is big business in America, the birthplace of casual dining. In 2006, there were about 925,000 restaurants in the United States, which means there is roughly one restaurant for every 300 people, and 70 percent of them are single-restaurant small businesses. More than 50 percent of American adults have worked at one time in the restaurant industry. Estimates are that Americans spent $511 billion in these eating and drinking establishments, which have 12.5 million employees, thus making the restaurant industry second only to government in number of workers. On a given day, 130,000,000 Americans visit a restaurant for a meal or a snack, and they spend, on average, $2,434 per household, or $974 per person per year, eating out. Americans spent 47 percent of their total food money in restaurants in 2006, up dramatically from only 25 percent in 1955. Americans like to eat out. Sixty-six percent of them agree that they can get flavorful food eating out that cannot easily be duplicated at home.[3] Americans spend about $165 billion a year at full-service restaurants. Snack and nonalcoholic beverage bars pull in almost $17 billion, cafeterias and buffets, another $5.3 billion. Bars and taverns have annual revenues of more than $15.2 billion. Hotel restaurants bring in nearly $25 billion a year. Business and leisure travel help to fuel restaurant sales, as do major holidays. Mother's Day, for example, brings 62 percent of those celebrating the occasion with special meals into restaurants. Many will go out for more than one meal. Twenty-two percent go for breakfast, 51 percent for lunch or brunch, and 59 percent for dinner.

Fast-food eating places account for over $134 billion per year of Americans' food expenditures.[4]

All-you-can-eat restaurants and buffets are popular in America. Needless to say, Nouvelle cuisine, as it morphed into American cooking as the new American cuisine, was not a hit with the typical hungry American. The problem was not fresh ingredients, or even the lack of rich sauces (gravy to Americans), but the outrage that a speck of meat supporting an architecture of unknown and strangely cut vegetables amid dots of red or green stuff dropped strategically on the plate appeared to be an appetizer at a main course price.

Full-service restaurants, all characterized by a waitstaff serving sit-down meals in the establishments, run the gamut from tiny little independent neighborhood eating establishments to themed, casual dining chain restaurants like Chipotle Mexican Grill, Outback Steak House, Olive Garden, and Red Lobster, all the way to world-class restaurants that have won the coveted five stars from the *Mobil Travel Guide.* In 2006, only 15 restaurants in all the United States earned that distinction. New York City had four; the San Francisco area, three; Atlanta, two; Los Angeles, Chicago, and Philadelphia, one each. The others were located in Washington, Virginia, Summerville, South Carolina, and Kennebunkport, Maine. Another 122 restaurants earned four stars, led by New York City, with 14, and Chicago, with 9.[5] A meal at any of these restaurants would be beyond the means of most Americans, even for a special occasion, and even if they could get reservations.

What do ordinary Americans order when they go to restaurants on a typical day? The top 10 selections for men in descending order according to one survey were a hamburger, French fries, pizza, a breakfast sandwich, a side salad, eggs, doughnuts, hash brown potatoes, Chinese food, and a main salad. Women ordered French fries, a hamburger, pizza, a side salad, a chicken sandwich, a breakfast sandwich, a main salad, Chinese food, and rice.[6]

Hamburgers, sold in the billions each year from ubiquitous franchises (McDonald's, Burger King, and Wendy's are, in order, the largest), bars and taverns, and county and state fairs—anywhere there are Americans—are the quintessential American food. Hamburgers are also featured at most backyard cookouts, tailgate parties, picnics, and sports events. Most of the beef consumed in America is in the form of ground beef—hamburger. American ingenuity has elevated the simple hamburger to a gastronomic art form. The hamburger chains have attempted to brand their burgers by charbroiling them, flame-broiling them, steaming them with onions, and grilling them; by shaping them round, square, and triangular; and by heaping them with varieties of condiments including lettuce, tomatoes, mayonnaise, special sauces, secret sauces, salad dressings, onions, peppers, chilies, mustard, and ketchup, not to exhaust the list. Many a local restaurateur claims to have the best hamburger

in town. Indeed, the variations are endless. A hamburger steak, ground sirloin, may be at the pinnacle of the hamburger hierarchy, but the American meatloaf (a baked loaf of ground beef and pork and spices of choice) is a basic American concoction that has reached such gustatory heights that famous American-born French chef Julia Child called it American pâté.

Ordering a hamburger and fries is like ordering ham and eggs or milk and cookies—they just go together naturally in the American mind. French fries, as the name implies, are not American in origin (they are Belgian, as the name does not imply). Neither, of course, is pizza, which Americans have transformed from a simple Italian tomato bread starter into a gigantic complete meal. Bigger is always better; Americans eat around 100 acres of pizza every day. Ninety-three percent of all Americans eat at least one pizza a month; about 3 billion pizzas are sold every year. Like the hamburger, the pizza has been subjected to American inventiveness. There are nearly 70,000 pizzerias in the United States, 64.3 percent of which are independents, but they accounted for a bit fewer than 50 percent of total U.S. sales of almost $31 billion. The top 25 pizzeria chains with nearly 25,000 stores account for just over 50 percent of total U.S. sales. Pizza Hut, the largest chain, alone accounts for over 17 percent of all sales.[7] They, too, are round and square, small and large, and can have just about anything on them. There are Hawaiian pizzas (pineapple and ham), Mexican pizzas, barbeque pizzas, white pizzas (no tomato sauce), fish pizzas, vegetable pizzas, Cajun pizzas, eggplant pizzas, venison pizzas, duck pizzas, and even breakfast pizzas, with peanut butter and jelly or bacon and eggs. Sixty-two percent of Americans want meat on their pizza, and 36 percent of all pizzas ordered have pepperoni on them. Other traditional favorite ingredients are mushrooms, extra cheese, sausage, green peppers, and onions.[8]

There are about an equal number of Italian and Chinese full-service restaurants in America. Among limited service restaurants, mostly carryout establishments, Mexican restaurants outnumber Chinese restaurants seven to five and Italian restaurants seven to two.[9] All together, there are more than 40,000 each of Mexican and Chinese restaurants in the United States. Italian, Chinese, and Mexican cuisines have been completely incorporated into what might be called the category of typical American food, what Americans like to eat, and they eat a lot of it. Spaghetti and meatballs, egg rolls, and tacos are standard fare eating out and at home. If college students can be thought of as future trendsetters, there is no going back to old-time plain American cooking. When asked what their favorite cuisines were, 95 percent liked Italian; 90 percent liked Mexican; and 83 percent liked Chinese.[10]

Many have decried the fact that the traditional American sit-down family meal has gone the way of tintype and typewriters. Most parents work

outside the home, and kids have busy schedules filled with athletic activities, events, and other after-school obligations, to which they must be shuttled back and forth. Eating on the go is the new American meal tradition. There is little time for food preparation and precious little time to gulp it down. America has produced new generations for whom comfort food in later life is a box of macaroni and cheese, which they learned to make in a microwave at the age of five, mostly out of necessity. So what are Americans eating at home?

A trip to the grocery store, where shelf space is at a premium and grocers give space only to what sells fast, lends some understanding. Fresh fruit and vegetables get half an aisle, as do fresh meats (a lot of space for hamburger) and breads. Soft drinks (Coke, Pepsi, and tens of variations) and snacks (potato chips, tortilla chips, peanuts, etc.) get an entire aisle. Juices and various kinds of sport drinks have nearly half an aisle, and canned vegetables get half that. Soups, in cans, in ready-to-eat containers, and in boxes, get about a quarter aisle. Fruit, in cans, but mostly in ready-to-eat containers, get about a quarter of an aisle, but cookies and crackers get more space. There seems to be a lot of boxes: rows of cake mixes, bread mixes, muffin mixes, and cookie mixes. Cereal, the all-American breakfast food, gets a full side of an aisle. Even more impressive is the space given to boxes of rice, potatoes, and pasta. Boxes of potatoes may seem unnatural, but by just adding water, milk, and butter or margarine, and a few minutes of cooking, a variety of potato dishes can be created quickly. Rice gets some space, but not much in its pure form. Small boxes of rice with flavor packets tucked into the box get quite a bit of space. Nearly an entire row is filled with pasta in all its sizes and shapes, accompanied by jars of prepared spaghetti sauce, clam sauce, and Alfredo sauce. The Mexican food section is growing, but the Italian foods, as understood, coopted, and transformed by Americans, are the space winner. Busy American cooks can also go to another aisle to choose from nearly half a row of boxes of macaroni and cheese, pasta salad, and pasta dishes. In fact, in the continuing tribute to American food as the ultimate fusion cuisine, a chicken quesadilla flavor pasta is now available in a box. Those who find that to be too much fusion can always rely on Hamburger Helper available in several flavors. Just fry the hamburger, add the flavor packet and pasta and some water, and you have an American meal.

There are often two entire aisles of frozen food cases in grocery stores, which stands to reason because 94 percent of Americans sometimes buy frozen food on a typical trip to the grocery, and 30 percent always do. Six times a month, the typical American sits down to a heated up frozen meal.[11] In 2003, Americans spent over $6 billion on frozen dinners and entrees. In total, they spent $29.2 billion on frozen foods. Frozen vegetable sales of $2.8 billion,

A long grocery store aisle in one of America's large supermarkets. Corbis.

which included $858 million of frozen potatoes, nearly equaled frozen pizza sales of $2.74 billion. Sales of ice cream, which many Americans would consider a homegrown invention, came to $4.8 billion.[12]

Wine is sold in some 3,000 grocery stores as well as other stores across the nation. U.S. wine consumption has been increasing steadily since 1991 and across age and ethnic lines. Many Americans now consider wine to be a requirement of a good meal, especially in a good restaurant, but it is also served at home on special occasions. Wine is a staple at parties, often replacing hard liquor. In 2005, wine sales in the United States totaled 703 million gallons, valued at $26 billion. Table wines accounted for most of the sales at 619 million gallons; champagne and sparkling wines came to only 30 million gallons. The remainder was dessert wines. Amazingly, California wines took a 63 percent market share of all wines sold. California produced 532 million gallons of wine in 2005, of which 441 million gallons were sold in the United States. Premium wines, defined as $7 or more per bottle, were 66 percent of revenues, and everyday wines, below $7 per bottle, constituted the remainder. U.S. wine exports of 101 million gallons were 95 percent California wines. While wine is grown all across America, there can be little doubt that

California wines are the ones that have made American wines respectable around the globe.[13]

Americans like American beer. In fact, July is American beer month. Breweries were first licensed in New England in 1637. Beer is now an $83 billion business. In 2005, domestic beer sales of 178.8 million barrels (a barrel equals 31 U.S. gallons) dwarfed sales of 25.7 million barrels for imported beers. The large brewers, such as Anheuser Busch, with its flagship Budweiser brand, dominate the domestic beer market. That company alone accounts for around half of all domestic beer sales. The big brewers—also including Miller, Coors, and Pabst—have attempted to bolster their sales by catering to weight-conscious beer drinkers with light and low-carbohydrate brews, which are overtaking traditional lagers in sales. There is, however, another concurrent trend in American brewing filled by America's 1,415 craft breweries, which are turning out multiflavored and full-bodied 100 percent malt beers. These regional craft breweries, contract breweries, microbreweries, and brewpubs together are a $4.3 billion dollar business that produces about 7 million barrels annually and takes a 3.42 percent share of the American beer market. That is not much compared to the noncraft domestic brewers' 84.14 percent of the market or even imported beers' share of 12.43 percent, but craft brewers are providing Americans with an alternative to what critics have been known to call insipid American beer.[14]

America's original contribution to the family of distilled spirits was inspired by a Native American food staple combined with Scotch-Irish immigrant distilling know-how and then given a French name. It even caused a rebellion in 1794 in Pennsylvania that George Washington himself had to put down after the federal government tried to tax it. Bourbon whiskey, the old red eye, rotgut, and firewater of the Wild West, was distinguished from other whiskies by the use of corn in the mash. Corn was preferred in southern whiskey making, rather than the rye that was used prevalently in the North. Americans soon came to favor the smoothness of the corn-based whisky. By 1784, commercial distilleries were operating in Kentucky, and Bourbon County, Kentucky, named for the French royal family who supported American independence against the English, became the center of bourbon whiskey production in the United States, thus lending its name to the product. Today, regulations require that bourbon be at least 51 percent corn and aged for not less than two years in new charred barrels. Tennessee whiskey, a distinct classification from bourbon, has an additional requirement of being filtered through sugar maple charcoal. Moonshine, untaxed clear whiskey (the Civil War brought in the permanent taxation of whiskey) legendarily distilled in the hills of Kentucky and Tennessee by the light of the moon to avoid federal agents and aged in a glass jar, is the source of much

American humor and a stepping off point for story lines that celebrate individual freedom over government regulation.[15]

Alcoholic beverages made up only about 13 percent of each American's total consumption of 192 gallons of liquids in 2004. In the country that made Coke and Pepsi internationally known trademarks, combined diet and nondiet carbonated soft drinks alone counted for 28 percent of consumption. That is about 52 gallons a year for each American, for which Americans spent about $66 billion. Far behind in second place, bottled water was only 12.4 percent. Curiously, milk, coffee, beer, and all others (including tap water, vegetable juices, and sports drinks) each account for between 11 percent and 12 percent of liquid consumption per year. Fruit juices came in at 7.6 percent and tea at 4.4 percent. Americans have about 450 soft drinks from which to choose that are produced in around 400 plants. The most efficient plants can produce 2,000 cans of soda per minute per line to satisfy the demand for more than 68 billion cans a year. Only 23 percent of soft drinks are fountain dispensed, rather than packaged.[16]

Americans consume legumes in large amounts, and in the case of peanuts, without knowing they are eating them, since most think they are nuts like walnuts or pecans. Peanuts came to the United States via South America and are grown today mostly on small farms in the South that average 100 acres. Each American eats over six pounds of peanuts—a favorite snack food both roasted and salted and great with beer and cocktails—and products made from peanut butter a year. Most peanuts are used to make peanut butter, which was patented by Harvey Kellogg in 1895, who also brought corn flakes to the world, but it was first sold at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. By 1908, it was being produced commercially. The annual consumption of peanut butter, on which Americans spend $800 million a year, is enough to make 10 billion peanut butter and jelly sandwiches (PB&Js). Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches—soft white bread, peanut butter, and Concord grape (preferably) jelly—have a place in every young student's lunch pail. The typical young American will have eaten 1,500 PB&Js before graduating from high school.[17]

In America's schizophrenic lifestyle, there is one thing that brings families together: the backyard cookout, which usually takes place on weekends with family and friends. For Americans in New England and the Midwest, it is a celebration of the outdoors after being shut in the house all winter and liberation from the kitchen. Most families have outdoor grills—some cheap and serviceable charcoal grills, others gas-fired and quite elaborate. Grilling the meat—spareribs, steaks, hamburgers, hot dogs, pork chops—is typically the man's job for some primordial reason. Back in the kitchen, the woman prepares (or opens the containers of) the staples of the cookout: coleslaw (a gift

to America from early Dutch settlers), macaroni salad, and baked beans. The red ketchup and yellow mustard, the jar of pickles, and some sliced onions and tomatoes are placed on the backyard picnic table with the hotdog and hamburger buns, the beer and soft drinks are in the cooler, and the party is under way. Ice cream, brownies, and watermelon are for dessert.

Regional Cuisines

The East

American cuisine began, of course, in New England, where English cooking and ingredients fused with native Indian cooking and local ingredients. Indian succotash, or mixed vegetables (green beans, lima beans, and corn), is still the most eaten vegetable in the United States. A cookout or picnic anywhere in America probably includes Boston baked beans, for which there are innumerable recipes. Cranberries in one form or another and Vermont maple syrup are available in every big grocery store in the country. Pumpkin pie is a required Thanksgiving dessert. Indian pudding, made with molasses, yellow cornmeal, and brown sugar, is a fusion of English pudding making with native corn. Rhode Island Johnny Cakes are popular pancakes made with white cornmeal. Boston brown bread is also made with cornmeal.

The coasts off New England make seafood a basic staple of the New England diet. Massachusetts even named the cod its state fish. Baked cod, codfish pie, and cod balls remain popular dishes. Rhode Island is famous for its clam cakes. If there were a state soup in Massachusetts, it would be creamy white New England clam chowder. The New York version, called Manhattan clam chowder, has tomatoes that redden the broth. The New England clambake and Maine lobster bake are, however, the region's premier outdoor eating events. Quahogs are hard-shelled clams that can be found up and down the eastern coast but are most prevalent between New Jersey and Cape Cod, where environmental conditions favor them. In order of smallest to largest size, quahogs are also known as little necks, cherrystones, and chowders. Native Americans used the shells as money, and they were also the probable source of this cooking technique. The clambake, in its elemental form, takes place in a pit on a beach, in which rocks have been placed and a fire lit. The heated rocks steam the clams, unhusked corn, and potatoes, which have been layered in seaweed, when the pit is covered. The Maine lobster bake employs the same cooking technique and uses the same ingredients, to which lobster and mussels are added. Melted butter is a must with the lobster.

On down the coast, every cuisine in the world is available in New York City's 17,300 restaurants, including the best Jewish delicatessen food anywhere. Coney Island hotdogs, which also made their way to Cincinnati via

an impressed immigrant restaurateur, are a local specialty. In upstate New York, around Endicott, spiedies, chunks of meat marinated in vinegar, oil, oregano, and other spices, then skewered, cooked, and usually placed on a bun, were the creation of Italian immigrants. Buffalo helped to make chicken wings dipped in various sauces a national food, but its beef on weck (Kummelweck, a potato, caraway, and salted roll) of German origin remains a local specialty.

Turtle soup, rich, thick, and often flavored with sherry, are specialties in Maryland and Philadelphia. Meat from terrapins is used in Maryland, snapper meat in Philadelphia. Crab cakes can be found all along the Maryland coast, but the Chesapeake Bay crab cakes on Maryland's Eastern Shore are legendary.

In Philadelphia are those foot-long submarine sandwiches called *hoagies.* In Connecticut, they are called *grinders.* The Italian hoagie is made of salami, capicola, and provolone, with optional lettuce, tomatoes, red peppers, onions, vinegar and oil, and oregano. Meatball hoagies, drenched in a tomato sauce, are also available. The Philly cheesesteak, however, is Philadelphia's best-known sandwich. Fresh, thinly sliced beef is grilled, and American cheese (sometimes provolone) or a processed cheese spread is placed on the

A fresh Maine lobster satisfies the taste buds of many New Englanders during the summertime. Getty Images/PhotoDisc.

beef in a long roll. Peppers, onions, and other toppings may be added, but if the cheesesteak is not dripping and nearly impossible to eat politely, it is not a real Philly cheesesteak. Cheese fries, French fried potatoes topped with cheese, can usually be purchased wherever cheesesteaks are sold. Philadelphia and the region north and west of the city are famous for soft pretzels, a gift of the heavy German immigration there. In Philadelphia, soft pretzels are eaten with mustard. It is worth a trip out of Philadelphia to Amish country around Bird-in-Hand, Intercourse, and Lancaster to satisfy a sweet tooth with local specialties. Shoofly pie is an incredibly sweet molasses and sugar pie. Whoopie pies are two cookies, usually chocolate, but oatmeal cookies can also be found, that are sandwiched together by a cream filling. It seems clear how shoofly pie was named, and apparently, whoopie pies make one yell whoopie! at first bite.

The South

Fried chicken is the South's primary contribution to a national cuisine, but in fact, many southern dishes have crept far beyond their original boundaries. Soul food as well as Cajun and Creole cuisines are subsets of southern cooking. They are popular and available everywhere. Georgia pecan pie and Florida key lime pie, buttermilk biscuits and corn bread, hush puppies and salt-cured Virginia country ham are not just southern anymore. Traditionally, southerners prefer rice to potatoes and pork to beef; they like their meats fried or barbequed, their iced tea sweet, and grits for breakfast with ham, biscuits, and red-eye gravy.

Rice has long been grown in the Carolina lowlands and finds its way into numerous traditional southern dishes. (Potatoes do not grow well in the hot southern climate.) Savannah red rice, kin to Louisiana red beans and rice, mixes rice with bacon, peppers, onions, spices, tomatoes, Tabasco sauce, and optional shrimp or sausage. Florida's yellow rice, colored with saffron, is a gift from Spanish colonizers. Rice pilau, also called purloo, is thought to have been brought into the port of Charleston by trading ships in early colonial times. There are many recipes for pilau, a dirty rice dish that may contain bacon fat, okra, red peppers, onions, seafood, and country ham. Rice pudding is also an old southern dish, but fresh Georgia and South Carolina peaches make an even better dessert.

The pit barbeque probably originated with blacks in the Carolinas, and pork was the meat of choice, doused with a somewhat vinegary sauce. Chickens, too, were barbequed. Today, any kind of barbeque, including beef, is popular in the South. Along the coasts of southern states, seafood is abundant. Fried fish is a favorite, but crabs offer special treats. Around Mobile, Alabama, crabs from Mobile Bay are the basis for the local specialty, West

Indies salad: fresh crabmeat and diced onions in a marinade of vinegar and oil, eaten with crackers. Soft-shell crabs, when in season, might be found in spider burgers. Stone crabs in south Florida are a very special delight. In Virginia and parts of Maryland, Crab Norfolk is a specialty that combines lump crabmeat, tarragon, rice, cream, country ham, and butter for a uniquely southern taste.

The submarine sandwich, made with various cold cuts and lettuce, tomatoes, onions, and so on, as optional toppings, is available all over the South. Around New Orleans, however, the East Coast grinder, hero, or hoagie morphs into a po'boy. Po'boys can have about anything in them—oysters, ham, beef, shrimp, sausage, lunchmeat, chicken, hamburger—but the French bread makes them distinctive, and eating a po'boy with mayonnaise, ketchup, and gravy calls for an immediate change of clothing. New Orleans also has a distinctive local sandwich of Sicilian origin, the muffuletta, which is also difficult to eat daintily. This large round sandwich is filled with cold cuts and cheese, over which is spread an olive salad flavored with garlic, peppers, capers, celery, and oregano. The South also has its own version of the midwestern White Castle slyder, the Krystal. Only true gourmands can distinguish between a slyder and a Krystal because in America, a hamburger is a hamburger.

Soul food originated from slaves imported primarily from West Africa before 1808, when the external slave trade was ended by law. They brought with them various cultural cooking habits, which were once isolated to southern plantations but moved throughout the country, especially after World War II, to northern urban areas as African Americans sought employment there in a tremendous northern migration. Soul food developed from these West African cultures as they were homogenized on plantations, and blacks used the new foods available to them. African cooking influenced both Creole and southern cooking. Soul food is characterized by the use of pork fat, usually bacon fat, as a substitute for palm oil used in Africa, the use of sauces and spices (often pepper), beans, mustard and turnip greens, okra, yams, bananas, and melons. Pork and chicken are the preferred meats, and Africans ate the whole animal. Bread is a staple. Corn is used to make cornmeal, hominy, grits, and bread. Barbeque is a specialty. Typical dishes include black-eyed pea soup, fried pork chops, chitterlings, fried chicken, fried fish, collard greens, and mixed greens. Gullah rice (rice, nuts, butter, and celery) is a specialty of African Americans isolated on islands off the Carolinas and Georgia who maintained old traditions.[18]

The Creole and Cajun cuisines of south Louisiana around New Orleans are often spoken and thought of together, but they have separate origins, even though time has obscured differences. Creoles were the first born-in-America

children of the mix of Europeans (Germans, Italians, French, English, Spanish), Africans, and Native Americans who settled the Gulf Coast from Mobile, Alabama, to New Orleans early in the eighteenth century. Creole cooking developed in New Orleans from the contributions of all these groups. Spanish paella became jambalaya. French bouillabaisse became gumbo, flavored with okra from Africans and filé powder (ground sassafras leaves) from natives. German sausage makers contributed their knowledge to help create Creole hot sausages and chaurice. Acadians (Cajuns), French Canadian settlers forcibly cast out from Nova Scotia by the British, began reassembling in south Louisiana in the 1750s. Already with over 100 years of pioneering experience, these were hard-scrapple people accustomed to living off what the land provided them. More isolated than the Creoles, Cajuns nevertheless came into contact with the Creole culture that surrounded them. The three classic dishes of New Orleans—gumbo, bisque, and étouffée—are built on a roux, which is flour browned in oil. Onions, bell peppers, celery, and garlic usually are added, along with a variety of seafood choices. Chicken can also be used, and spicy sausages like andouille and tasso give added flavor to these one-pot stews, which are usually served over rice.[19]

Cajuns also were known to cook anything that swam or slithered or crawled or flew through the swamps they inhabited. The Cajun crawfish boil remains a celebratory event. Anything could end up in a 20-gallon pot over a propane burner filled with salted and spiced water or beer. Most often, it is crawfish, but shrimp and crabs are popular, too. The seafood boil includes potatoes, ears of corn, and onion, like its northern cousins, but garlic, vinegar, lemons, and zesty spices may be added, too, which gives this boil a special flavor. Beer is the preferred beverage, and Dixie is the preferred beer.

The Midwest

Traditional midwestern cooking is quite plain and, to many tastes, quite bland. Salt and pepper in moderation are the spices of choice. The English and German habits of overcooking meat and vegetables survive in this basic meat and potatoes fare, where a beef roast, mashed potatoes, corn on the cob, green beans, and apple pie make up a fancy dinner. The hearty homemade farm meals of the past—chicken noodles, pork with dumplings—have given way to hasty box-top recipes that reflect the fact that farm families, like most American families, need two incomes to survive, and time is at a premium. Quantity is often more prized than quality—witness Chicago's contribution to pizza, turning it from a delicate crust with a dash of tomato sauce, cheese, and pepper flakes into a deep-dish thick crust to contain all the cheeses and meats available in the Midwest.

The potluck dinner is the most radically democratic of American culinary experiences. There are no rules; no one is in charge. All it takes is one person with the nerve to invite several friends over for a party with the instruction that they have to bring something and bring their own beverages. (The fomenter of the event usually supplies plastic glasses, plastic silverware, and paper or plastic plates, and, with luck, iced-down coolers.) Potlucks are, clearly, not upscale social events, or they would be catered at the expense of the host. Potlucks can be found in homes, offices, and church basements. They can be found all over the country, but they are a favorite in the Midwest. Those who accept an invitation to a potluck may compare notes about who is bringing what, but it is a fact that potlucks always seem to work out—there is never all appetizers, all main dishes, all vegetables, all salads, or all desserts, and these are the only five choices.

Potlucks bring out foods familiar to midwesterners, in part owing to the cook's need for adulation, and in part owing to the cook's desire to fix something everyone will like. Typical appetizers might include deviled eggs, a tray of cheese and crackers, little hot dogs enveloped in a crust (often called pigs in a blanket), cut fresh vegetables (carrots and celery are the most popular) with a dipping sauce, and guacamole with tortilla chips.

Casseroles are popular at potlucks. Main courses seem to always include macaroni and cheese, tuna noodle casserole (canned tuna and store-bought noodles baked in canned cream of mushroom or celery soup, topped with potato chips, sometimes with peas), and chili-mac (a concoction of hamburger and onion, noodles, tomatoes, and some chili powder, with cheese on top, with or without red kidney beans). Salads can range from a simple shredded lettuce and cheese tossed with ranch dressing to taco salad, carrot salad (shredded carrots with mayonnaise, raisins, and nuts), three-bean salad (green and yellow beans with kidney beans and onion in vinegar and oil), and fruit salads (canned fruit encased in flavored gelatin). Vegetable selections might include creamed corn, scalloped potatoes, a sweet potato casserole sweetened with brown sugar and a topping of marshmallows, a broccoli and cheese casserole, and a green bean casserole (canned green beans in canned mushroom soup with fried onion rings on top). Desserts are often spectacular because the real cooks like to show them off. There are apple pies and cherry pies with golden peaked crusts, chocolate meringue pies, lemon meringue pies, and butterscotch meringue pies. Creative mixtures of cherry or raspberry gelatin and Cool Whip (a fake whipped cream purchased already whipped in a frozen container) can also be found. Every potluck has a least two pans of brownies, cut into squares, from which to choose. The chocolate-frosted ones go first, but all of those moist chocolate little cakes quickly disappear.

The big American breakfast still survives in the Midwest, if not at home, in the diners and little restaurants that cover the countryside. Eggs—scrambled or fried, over easy or sunny side up—with bacon, ham, or sausage, buttered toast with jelly or jam, a side order of pancakes with butter and syrup, or maybe some French toast or hash brown potatoes, and as much coffee as you can drink are expected. Ham and eggs as a breakfast duo is believed to be an American innovation, but the American breakfast is of certain English origin.

The Midwest is not without interesting or unique foods. Wild rice, which is actually a large-grained grass, grows naturally in lakes, rivers and streams around the Great Lakes area. Native Americans, particularly the Ojibway and Menominee, harvested it from canoes by flailing the grains off the plants into the canoes. Also called water oats, squaw rice, and marsh oats, wild rice (genus *Zizania*) was a staple to Natives and European adventurers in the North Country. Today, it is often mixed with long-grained rice as a side dish, but it is also cooked alone. It was not until 1950 in Minnesota that wild rice began to be grown in flooded fields surrounded by dikes. Minnesota remains the largest producer, followed by California.[20]

The Germans certainly left their mark to the extent that native midwesterners think that goetta, leberwurst, bratwurst, weisswurst, and blutwurst are American foods that could be found everywhere. The Germans, of course, also brought beer to the Midwest to drink with the sausages, centering brewing empires in St. Louis and Milwaukee as well as Cincinnati. Sauerkraut is a frequently served side dish and a requirement with a pork roast. Zwieback is often fed to teething children. Pretzels and potato salad are ubiquitous. Rye and pumpernickel breads, Danish coffee cakes, and pastries are typically available.

The Poles who migrated to Pennsylvania, many to work in coal mines, gave Pittsburgh one of its culinary claims to fame: pierogies. Pittsburgh prizes pierogies whether fried, baked, or boiled. They are circles of dough pinched together in a half-circle with any assortment of fillings, including, but not limited to, mashed potatoes and cheddar cheese, sauerkraut, cabbage, cottage cheese, or hamburger. They are perhaps best fried in butter and onions. They can be a meal or a side dish, and since they can be filled with anything, they can be subject to complete transformation in the American kitchen, but most pierogie aficionados want them the way grandma used to make them.

The Norwegians who settled in Wisconsin and Minnesota remember their North Atlantic heritage around Thanksgiving and Christmastime by enjoying a feast of lutefisk. Not unlike the New England baked cod dinner, this is served with potatoes, peas, and bread, which in this case is lefse. However, the cod is neither fresh nor restored salt cod, but marinated and preserved in

lye. The vapors from lutefisk, which translates as "lye fish," is said to have the power to peel paint from walls, bring tears to the eyes, and buckle the knees of a latter-day Viking. Lutefisk, after several water baths, is simply salted and peppered, baked, and served with melted butter. Gently put, a lutefisk dinner is an unforgettable experience.

Wisconsin is the biggest cheese-producing state in the United States, accounting for 2.4 billion pounds (26.4%) of America's total cheese production of 9.13 billion pounds in 2005. There are 115 plants making cheese in Wisconsin, and where cheese is being made, cheese curds, the local specialty that does not keep over a day or so or travel well, are available.[21] Cheese curds result from the cheese-making process, and they are plucked from vats before the cheese is blocked and aged. They may come from any cheese, but American-type cheese (a cheddar) is the favorite and the most produced in Wisconsin. Cheese curds are a slightly salty snacking treat with the consistency of a pencil eraser, and they emit squeaks against the teeth as if they were polishing the teeth squeaky clean.

The stockyards of Kansas City and Omaha, on the edge of the Great Plains, were the last stop for millions of animals on the way to slaughter. Omaha is so proud of its beef that they named a local football team the Omaha Beef. There could be no greater honor. The city is famous for its steaks. Kansas City even has a cut of steak named after it, but the city is perhaps more famed for its barbeque, both beef and pork. Kansas City barbeque is defined by the use of hickory in the fire for a special flavor and a sauce that is, in midwestern tradition, neither too spicy like Carolina sauces nor too hot like Texas sauces. Molasses helps to thicken the tomato-based sauce and lend it a certain sweetness. A dry rub is used to flavor the meat before cooking. Kansas City is filled with barbeque joints.[22]

What barbeque is to Kansas City, chili is to Cincinnati, a city with a old German heritage. A Texan, however, would find Cincinnati chili to be something other than chili, if not a bit of a joke. There are more than 180 chili parlors (it is not clear why a chili restaurant is called a parlor) in Cincinnati, serving a chili that was created by a Greek immigrant restaurateur of the 1920s who had trouble selling Greek food to Germans. He invented what he called a chili out of a Greek dish, substituting ground beef for lamb, adding some chili powder, but keeping spices like cinnamon, allspice, and cloves in the dish. In this great fusion of cuisines, he also decided to serve his chili over spaghetti. Today, this is known a two-way chili. Add grated cheese and it is three-way chili; add onions and it is four-way; add kidney beans and it is five-way. Coneys are hot dogs with mustard, chili, and grated cheese.[23]

For folks who live around the upper Great Lakes in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, the fish boil is a Nordic right of summer and fall. Unlike

the New England clambakes and lobster bakes, this is not a celebration of seafood, but rather a celebration of lake food—freshwater fish like lake trout and whitefish. The fish boil is an outdoor event. A raging fire is stoked under a large kettle or pot filled with salted water, seasoned with bay leaves, peppercorns, and allspice. First, a wire basket of potatoes is lowered into the boiling water. Then onions are placed in the wire basket to boil with the potatoes. Then the cleaned fish are lowered into the kettle in a separate basket to cook for about 10 minutes. A pint or so of kerosene is then thrown on the fire to produce an overboil. After the pyrotechnics, the meal is ready. The fish, onions, and potatoes are usually accompanied by bread and coleslaw, butter, and lemons.[24] Beer is the preferred beverage for adults.

There are two foods born in the Midwest that are still largely available only in the Midwest. Long before there was a McDonald's, a Wendy's, or a Burger King, the Midwest had White Castles and Maid-Rites. The first White Castle restaurant opened in Wichita, Kansas, in 1921, selling hamburgers for a nickel. Now with 380 locations, many of those in Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, and around St. Louis, Missouri, White Castle sold around 500 million burgers, affectionately called slyders, in 2005, and claims to be the first hamburger chain to sell 1 billion hamburgers. Slyders are three-and-a-half-inch square, very thin, salted and peppered hamburgers with five holes punched through them that are steamed with dehydrated onions, and then the bun is placed on top of them so that it absorbs the flavor of the process. A slice of dill pickle is placed on the meat, and the sandwich is placed in a box. A sack of slyders is six burgers (mustard and ketchup separately packaged) and a little bit of heaven. White Castle considers its product so unique that they have based their advertising on craving slyders, a message not lost on midwestern college students with the munchies in the early morning.[25]

In 1926, a butcher in Muscatine, Iowa, combined "a special cut and grind of meat with a selected set of spices" and the Maid-Rite sandwich was born, when an unknown patron declared on tasting the sandwich that it was "just made right." There are now more than 70 Maid-Rite restaurants branching out from Iowa and declaring to be "America's #1 Favorite Made to Order Loose Meat Sandwich." The special seasoning remains a secret, but is thought to contain garlic, onion, tomato juice, brown sugar, Worcestershire sauce, and seasoned salt. Maid-Rite claims to have invented casual dining and prides itself on providing an atmosphere of gracious, hometown hospitality. In addition to the Maid-Rite sandwich, the menu also includes a pork tenderloin sandwich, greatly favored in the Midwest, and, in deference to the Midwest's changing taste, a Taco-Rite. The restaurants also serve shakes, malts, and ice cream cones.[26]

The Southwest and West

In the Southwest and on into the southern West Coast, Spanish influence, mixed with native and Mexican, has created a special regional cuisine. Southwestern cuisine's basic ingredients are corn, chiles, beans, and squashes. Tamales are cornmeal flour, masa, stuffed with meat or Spanish rice and steamed in cornhusks. Tacos are soft or fried corn tortillas stuffed with meat and covered with salsa and lettuce, tomatoes, and cheese. Enchiladas are corn tortillas fried and stuffed and dipped in chili sauce. Chiles rellenos are deep-fried mild chiles stuffed with cheese and served as an accompaniment to meals. Some main ingredients are chayotes, pear-shaped squashes; chiles—Anaheims, Chiles del Arbol, chimayos, jalapeños, poblanos, and serranos; and dried corn in the form of cornmeal, posole, and tortillas. Blue cornmeal is especially flavorful. Posole is the hominy of the Southwest, produced by treating dried kernels of corn with lime. It is cooked before use and often eaten as a side dish and sometimes alone. Jicama is often used for salads and side dishes. Nopales (cactus pears) are eaten as vegetable or in salads. Piñones, pine nuts, are used in cuisine, too. Tomatillos, related to tomatoes but staying green when ripe, are used in salads, soups, and sauces. Burritos and chimichangas are southwestern

A giant enchilada is cut into many pieces to be distributed to visitors at the Whole Enchilada Fiesta in New Mexico. © AP Photo/The Las Cruces Sun-News, Norm Dettlaff.

U.S. adaptations of old Mexican foods. Modern southwestern cuisine fuses various other cuisines with traditional southwestern ingredients to create new flavors. Thus one might find escargot enchiladas with Madeira sauce and endive or a cassolette of sweetbreads and pinto beans on the menu.[27]

Tex-Mex cuisine can be considered a Texan take on Mexican food, and since Texas is cattle country, adding beef to the Mexican dishes was only natural. Chili, once simply beans in a tomato sauce, became chili con carne, or chili with meat. Texas red chili is not imaginable without beef. Chili lends itself to personal innovation and the addition of secret ingredients, especially spices and chiles. Chili cook-offs are frequent and popular events. Fajitos, wheat tortillas filled with marinated skirt steak, are, like red chili, a pure Tex-Mex creation. What passes for Mexican food in most of America's Mexican restaurants is, in fact, an American adaptation, like Tex-Mex of true Mexican food.[28] The frequent use of chiles also distinguishes Texas barbeque, which was traditionally beef. The sauces used in and on barbeque tend to be hot and spicy, as opposed to the vinegary Carolina sauces and sweet Kansas City sauces.

New Mexico green chili is often just a hot wedding of pinto beans with green chiles flavored with salt pork. Green chile stew adds pork to the pot. Another popular New Mexico dish is *calabacitas,* a mixture of green chiles, squash, corn, and cream or cheese. In northern New Mexico, dried and roasted corn kernels called *chicos* are cooked with red chiles, spices, and pork to make a favorite dish, also called *chicos.* Sopaipillas, triangle-shaped deep-fried pastry with honey, for dessert can help take the sting out of the chiles.

The birth of California cuisine is generally traced back to Alice Waters in the early 1970s and her restaurant Chez Panisse. Waters introduced the idea of using natural, locally grown fresh ingredients to produce her dishes. California cuisine is, therefore, not any one thing, neither a method of cooking nor any group of particular ingredients—it is local, based like most traditional regional cooking on available ingredients, including abundant seafood. Fresh vegetables, lightly cooked, and fresh fruits, berries, and herbs characterize the cuisine generally, but California cooking is also in fact a fusion of tastes from all over the world. The favorite main courses for 2006 of San Francisco's top chefs make the point. They include "seared yellow fin tuna, marinated summer cucumbers, daikon sprouts, yuzu-wasabi crème fraîche," "lobster roe crusted Japanese hamachi with a warm Maui onion shellfish vinaigrette," and "shellfish tom yum noodles with Thai basil pesto."[29]

The fusion of international cuisines is also going on in casual dining and fast food. In 1988, the three Wahoo brothers Wing, Ed, and Mingo founded Wahoo's in Southern California. Their objective was to introduce the Mexican fish taco to the California market but also to give their food a Brazilian flare (they grew up in Brazil) with some oriental highlights (their parents

ran a Chinese restaurant in Brazil). Now with 30 locations in California and Colorado, Wahoo's offers fish, chicken, steak, and vegetarian tacos, enchiladas, and burritos. The combo plate comes with ahi rice and black beans or spicy Cajun white beans.[30] Yet even in California, the cheap and portable hamburger is still a hamburger, great for eating while sitting on a freeway. In-N-Out Burger, with around 150 locations in California, allowed customers to order their hamburgers on a two-way speaker in 1948. Jack in the Box, the first drive-through franchise, started selling hamburgers in San Diego in 1951. Fatburger, a California hamburger franchise that claims to be "a culture" and "a phenomenon," started in 1952. McDonald's did not open its first location until 1955, and it was in Des Plaines, Illinois.[31]

It would be far from the mark to say that Chinese food began in California, of course, but Chinese-American food did indeed begin there. Chinese, most from the Canton area, first came to California in the 1840s to work on railroads and in gold mines, often in menial positions. Some Chinese entrepreneurs in the restaurant business discovered that they could sell Americanized versions of Chinese foods successfully. Chop suey houses spread across the nation. Many of them featured traditional Cantonese fare for their Chinese patrons and an English menu with such Chinese-American dishes as egg rolls, wonton soup, chop suey, sweet and sour pork, and even meats with lobster sauce. While Chinese fast food in America is for the most part Chinese-American food, excellent regional Chinese cooking has become available in the United States as Americans' tastes have matured. Cantonese dim sum is very popular. Mandarin dishes like mu-shu pork and pot stickers have become mainstays of Chinese restaurants. Even the hot cuisines of Szechwan and Hunan find their place now in America.[32]

The Pacific Northwest is known for salmon, oysters, apples, berries, and Oregon and Washington wines to drink with them. In fact, however, this area of the country also produces tremendous amounts of wheat, potatoes, lamb, beef, and dairy products. A great variety of vegetables are also successfully grown there. Rainbow trout are abundant in the freshwater streams all over the West, and in addition to salmon, the ocean provides Pacific cod, halibut, pollock, and other varieties of fish. The bays that produce the oysters also produce crab. Dairy production has given rise to local cheese making. Washington produces more apples than any other state. Wild mushrooms abound in the forests. Native berries include raspberries, strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, boysenberries, gooseberries, and the very special huckleberries, to name just a few. Grapes for wine have been grown in Washington since 1825. The developing cuisine of the Pacific Northwest makes use of these local foods much in the spirit of California cuisine. Fresh local food, perhaps with an accent of Asian influence, characterizes the taste of the Northwest.[33]

Fresh fish caught in the Pacific Ocean are often sold in street markets such as this one in Washington. Getty Images/MedioImages.

The luau is Hawaii's version of the New England clambake. Chicken and taro plant leaves cooked in coconut milk is called *luau,* thus the name of this traditional and symbolic feast. Today, of course, a luau may include roasted pig and other meats, fish in great variety, pineapples and coconuts, fruits, macadamia nuts, and so on. Whatever dishes a modern luau may include, it is never without poi, the Hawaiian specialty made by beating tarot root into a paste. Poi, like Scandinavian lutefisk, is an acquired taste. Luaus, without the poi, are popular for parties on the mainland, but in Hawaii, they are held mostly for the benefit of tourists. Indeed, the large Japanese population of the islands has made Hawaii the best state in the nation for Japanese food.

American Fashion

That's hot!

—Paris Hilton

Paris, Milan, London, Tokyo, and New York are the recognized fashion capitals of the world. Americans had long looked to Paris for high fashion. It could be argued that only the demise of Paris because of Nazi Germany's

occupation of France from 1940 until 1944 brought New York, and thus America, to the party. In fact, however, America had been developing and inventing a distinctive fashion look from its beginning that was purposely democratic, not aristocratic, and decidedly pragmatic, not flashy, and certainly not up to the quality and exacting standards of haute couture. When New York took over the international fashion lead, the effect was to rent the fabric of haute couture, so tightly woven for centuries in France. American fashion designers broke all the old rules, designed for the masses, and clothed them in ready to wear (RTW).

American fashion design was in fact democratized in the face of a mass market. The quintessential old rule that fashion was dictated from on high by a few fashion houses stood in sharp contrast with American thinking and tradition. American designers were quick to give the people what they wanted and placed their imprimaturs on the fashion that came up from the streets, such as grunge and urban hip-hop, that complemented the American casual lifestyle and that put modern twists on American classic styles, including western wear. The great American couture houses make their money from RTW lines of clothing and accessories, not from custom fitting individual clothing items to wealthy patrons. American clothing is mass-produced, most of it outside the country, in what has become a global industry.

Oddly enough, men's clothing was the first to be mass-produced in the United States in meaningful quantities. The problem with mass-producing clothing is that some standard is needed for sizing. The Civil War created the need for mass-produced uniforms, and as a pattern emerged from sizing soldiers, that military standard became the standard for sizing civilian mass-produced men's clothing. While women's clothing began to be mass-produced in the later 1920s, the movement for standardized women's clothing was pushed by population growth and the development of mass merchandisers like Sears, Roebuck and Co. It was not until 1941, however, that the basis for a standard for women's sizes emerged after a national study of women's sizes was published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1941. Yet it was still later, in 1958, that the government published a commercial standard, CS215-58, for women's sizes. The standard was updated and made voluntary in 1971 and then completely withdrawn in 1983.[34] Clothing marketers were quick to understand that a dress marked size 6 but cut to a standard size 10 sold better than the same dress marked size 10 and cut to a size 10.

Americans spent $326.5 billion on clothing and shoes in 2004. At the wholesale level, consumption totaled more than 18.4 billion garments and 2.15 billion pairs of shoes. Imports accounted for 91 percent of apparel and 98 percent of footwear. Most Americans are wearing clothes made in Central America and the Dominion Republic, owing to a trade agreement, and

China and Mexico. Most Americans are wearing shoes made in China, which alone accounted for 82 percent of footwear imports. One indication of the total commoditization of clothing and shoes is that even as retail prices have increased overall by 15.9 percent from 1993 to 2004, the retail prices of clothing and shoes have slipped 9.5 percent and 6.8 percent, while wholesale prices have remained about the same.[35] The fashion industry can make good money in this gigantic market only when it successfully brands its products to support higher noncommodity prices in the marketplace. Of course, a personal fashion statement cannot be made with clothing and shoes alone. The whole package also includes jewelry, accessories like handbags and rucksacks, and a scent. Marketing and advertising are therefore every bit as important as design and fabric in selling the American look.

There was a time even within the frames of baby boomers' lives when Americans traveling abroad were advised not to dress like Americans to avoid being conspicuous in a crowd. Today, however, much of the world dresses like Americans. From Moscow to Capetown, Buenos Aires to Tokyo, and Madrid to Beijing, the casual style invented by America has taken hold in a sea of humanity dressed in jeans and T-shirts. American fashion has long been sent around the world in Hollywood movies and, more recently, as a tie-in to American pop music.

American fashion reflects the diversity and complexity of American society as the personal expression of urban and country, rich and poor, young and old, ethnic, regional, religious, and even musical cultures. In very general terms, northeasterners are said to dress rather formally; southerners dress conservatively and maintain the old-fashioned nostrums—straw hats and seersucker suits may be worn only between Easter Sunday and Labor Day—that are pretty much dead elsewhere; midwesterners are considered to be quite cost-conscious, with a preference for practical and plain clothing; and westerners seem to prefer casual clothing. Cowboy boots and Stetson hats with a business suit would look normal in Dallas and Houston but quite out of place in Boston and Philadelphia. For most of the older immigrant populations, traditional dress comes out only for festivals and special events. Although most American Roman Catholic orders of religious women have abandoned habits for plain dress, religiously inspired dress may be seen occasionally on America's streets. The Hassidic Jews, mostly in New York City, have maintained their traditional garb, as have the Amish who settled first in Pennsylvania and have moved westward over time. Some American Muslim women choose to be in *hijab,* that is, wear head scarves, but it is not unusual to see them maintain the requirement for head-to-toe covering with a sweater or shirt and blue jeans rather than an overgarment. Indeed, it would be the exception, rather than the rule, that any American would stand out in a crowd

of fellow Americans by virtue of dress. The mass culture has assured a certain sameness in dress.

While there is no real distinctive eastern, midwestern, or southern style, the same cannot be said of the western style of dress. In fact, if there is indeed an indigenous American style, the western style would be it. The cowboy is, of course, the mythical iconic American. Tough, Golden Rule fair, a true individual in command of all around him, he roams the golden plains freely and uses his gun only when he has to. His dress is simple: cowboy hat; pointed leather cowboy boots; jeans (chaps optional), held on by a sturdy belt with a big buckle; and a denim shirt. On special occasions, he might don a shirt with fancy stitching and pearl buttons and slip on a bola tie. Celebrated in Wild West shows late in the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, the cowboy mythology grew larger through films and television, even as real cowboys virtually disappeared. Country music appropriated western wear, created singing rhinestone cowboys, and seemingly moved the center of the west to Nashville, Tennessee. Western fashion is very much alive on the rodeo circuits and even in fashion designers' collections. The Wild West continues its hold on the American imagination.[36]

American fashion is in a constant state of rebirth, borrowing from the past, appropriating from the present, and mixing up the signals by crossing traditional lines. It can be value laden; it can be dangerous. It can be practical; it can be outrageous. Fashion can also be confusing. Americans are never quite sure what to wear on occasions that demand formal, black tie optional, semiformal, casual, business casual, or informal attire. A "come as you are" party is an even more daring concept.

A number of famous American fashion designers have contributed in achieving an American look. New York City's Fashion Walk of Fame, which stretches along the east side of Seventh Avenue from 41st Street to 35th Street, is to American fashion designers as the forecourt to Hollywood, California's, Grauman's Chinese Theatre is to American movie stars. The plaques on the Manhattan sidewalks (no designers' footprints, but rather design sketches) honor American fashion designers for their contributions to American fashion. They were elected from 1999 to 2002 by ballots passed around to 150 industry leaders. Nominees were limited to those with "a significant New York presence" who owned their own businesses a minimum of 10 years and who made a "powerful impact on fashion" through their creative designs or use of materials or who "significantly influenced the way America dresses."[37]

Most of the fashion designers memorialized on the Fashion Walk of Fame are household names. Lilly Daché (1898–1989) came to New York City from France when she was only 16 years old. By the time she closed her shop in

1968, she had become the city's most reputed milliner, having added accessories and dresses to her salon. She also designed headgear for movie stars like Marlene Dietrich and Betty Grable. Her sculpted hats helped to define an American look for decades before hats became costume, rather than everyday wear. Maryland-born Claire McCardell (1905–1958), however, is often credited with originating the American look. She believed that fundamental American democratic values could and should be expressed in the clothing she designed. McCardell, working out of Townley Frocks, designed for workingwomen, not the idle class, and she believed that mass-produced clothing could also be fashionable, comfortable, and affordable. In the 1930s, she came out with the monastic dress, which women could shape to their bodies with a sash or belt. In 1940, McCardell's designs used a natural shoulder and pleats or bias cuts for comfortable wear. Her 1942 pop-over dress was a kind of wraparound. She designed for a casual and free lifestyle—this was American—at the beach, at play, at home, or at work. Even the fabrics she used, from denim and corduroy to seersucker and calico, expressed a basic casual feel.

Designers, of course, continued to cater to the wealthy. Charles James (1906–1978), though born in England, spent much the 1940s and 1950s in New York City designing opulent sculpted ball gowns that each in its own right was considered a work of art. Norman Norell (1900–1972) left Indiana to design clothes for Paramount Pictures in New York City in 1922. He also designed for Broadway productions. In 1944, he and his partner, Anthony, founded Traina-Norell and defined the American look during the war—empire line dresses, fur coats, and sequined evening sheaths. In 1960, with his own label, called simply Norell, he designed classic, impeccably tailored clothes meant to last and, in establishing the New York style, successfully translated couture to RTW. James Galanos (1924–) had his first show in Los Angeles but opened a shop in New York in 1952. His expensive off-the-rack ornamented gowns, favorites of Nancy Reagan, were superbly constructed. Main Rousseau Bocher (1891–1976), branding himself as Mainbocher, was born in Chicago but made his name in Paris. One of his famous clients was Wallis Simpson, the Duchess of Windsor. As war in Europe loomed, he returned to the United States, where he contributed jeweled sweaters and short evening dresses to the American look and designed uniforms for the new women's military units as well as the Girl Scouts. Pauline Trigère (1909–2002) left her Paris birthplace in 1937 and started her own fashion house in New York in 1942. When she began making RTW in the late 1940s, she was already a respected New York label. Her contributions to American fashion, in addition to her costume jewelry, included removable scarves and collars from dresses and coats, classic suits, sleeveless coats, opera capes, and reversible coats.

Anne Klein (1921–1974) was, in her day, the most popular sportswear designer in the United States. Her plaque on the Fashion Walk of Fame notes that the coordinated day and evening separates she developed, including her "body suits and zippered skirts, have become classic staples of the modern wardrobe." In 1948, she founded Junior Sophisticates, and in 1968, Anne Klein and Company, where she nurtured future designers who would impact American fashion. Bonnie Cashin (1915–2000), after designing handbags for Coach, working for 20th Century Fox and, designing women's military uniforms, formed her own business in 1953. Her loose-fitting, layered, interlocking women's clothing and the poncho as fashion as well as canvas and poplin raincoats were designed to express independence, adaptability, and the taste of the wearer.

American fashion could be playful. Geoffrey Beene (1924–2004) set up his own firm in 1962. A dress from his first collection made it to the cover of *Vogue,* and he suddenly had made it in the fashion world. Beene was one of the first to show short skirts, and his football jersey evening gown with jewels gained him some notoriety. Rudi Gernreich (1922–1985) came to California from Vienna in 1938. He formed Rudi Gernreich Inc. in 1964. Gernreich introduced to America and the world such innovations as knitted tube dresses, shirt-waist dresses, the women's topless bathing suit (the fashion sensation of 1964), the no-bra bra, and women's boxer shorts, a statement of the 1980s. Italian by birth and bred in Argentina, Giorgio di Sant'Angelo (1933–1989) came to the United States in 1962 and started a RTW business in 1966. He experimented with stretch fabrics, with the goal of freeing body movement. His body suits, devoid of zippers and buttons, could double as swimming wear.

Iowan Roy Halston Frowick (1932–1990) began his career as a milliner, having designed pillbox hats for Jackie Kennedy. He opened his own design business in 1966 and got into the RTW market. Halston was America's first minimalist designer—clean and simple lines with classic fabrics. Many considered him to be the best evening wear designer in the nation. His foray into mass merchandising a cheaper line with J.C. Penney put his jet set business in a tailspin, but this experience would not hold out for later designers. Ralph Lauren (1939–) is, in many ways, the quintessential American designer. Born in Bronx, New York, he has cleverly reinterpreted great American fashion of the past for the contemporary age and, in the process, has produced classically elegant men's wear and women's wear. His Polo brand is ubiquitous, but he designs beyond clothing for a total lifestyle. Lauren virtually invented the casual preppy style that has defined the look of the well-to-do. Another Bronx native, Calvin Klein (1942–), is perhaps the icon of late-twentieth-century and early-twenty-first century American fashion. From the 1970s

onward (Calvin Klein Inc. was founded in 1994 and sold in 2003), Klein defined American fashion, including jeans and underwear, with a minimalist approach and a zest for controversial advertising campaigns. Dominican-born Oscar de la Renta (1932–), on the other hand, is known for his blending of "Latin elegance and American ease." In the late 1960s, he notably featured bejeweled hot pants in his Gypsy collection, but his day wear for working-women, as in his less expensive OSCAR line, is quite restrained. His tasteful use of color maintains his Latin roots.

Bill Blass (1922–2002) bought the company he was working for in 1970, and Bill Blass Ltd. was born. His plaque on the Fashion Walk of Fame notes that he can "rightly be credited as one of the creators of a true 'American style.'" Best known for his women's day wear, it is Blass who can either be blamed or credited for Americans' confusion about what is sportswear and what is formal wear because he "brought the comfort and simplicity of sportswear into the realm of formal dressing." Sometimes referred to as the Dean of American Designers, Blass employed classic fabrics in garments that curved to the body. His designs, favored by notables such as Nancy Reagan and Barbra Streisand, could exude Hollywood glamour or be suitable for a country club setting. Perry Ellis (1940–1986) founded Perry Ellis International in 1978 and shared the designer spotlight with Blass in the 1980s. Ellis made his name in sportswear. He believed it should not be pretentious, and he sought to bring traditional fashion a modern American look. He helped to revive hand-knit sweaters.

Norma Kamali (1945–) opened her first shop in 1968 designing rhinestoned and appliquéd T-shirts. In 1974, she introduced parachute jumpsuits made of real parachute silk. Her sleeping bag coat came in 1975, and in 1977, she introduced swimwear that would make her famous. In 1978, Kamali opened OMO (On My Own), and in 1980, she introduced another fashion innovation, her Fashion at a Price collection, that featured her sweatshirt collection. She went on to develop fragrances, cosmetics, and gym and athletic wear as well as a no-wrinkle poly-jersey collection for travelers. Philadelphia native Willi Smith (1948–1987) wanted to design fashions that would fit somewhere between formal evening wear and very informal jeans. He founded WilliWear in 1976 and introduced moderately priced, brightly colored clothing oriented to young people that, with baggy pants and oversized shirts and sweaters, precursed the rap and hip-hop styles that would come later. Born in Connecticut in 1942, Betsey Johnson had a background in dance and was a Warhol groupie in the 1960s. She opened a boutique in 1969 and designed rock 'n' roll clothing in the 1970s. In 1978, she and a partner formed the Betsey Johnson label, now with stores worldwide that include accessories as well as clothing. Johnson designs youthful, sexy—microminis—and colorful, even

exuberant clothes, often in stretch fabrics that allow ease of movement. Marc Jacobs (1963–) is famous for his wit—the Freudian slip dress—and making grunge high fashion in 1982. His label Marc for the mass market is designed to be edgy and affordable. New Yorker Donna Karan (1948–) worked for Anne Klein and, after her death, designed sportswear for the company. She went out on her own in 1985 with the Donna Karan collection. Karan's designs for women, whether for sports, work, or evening wear, are simple, elegant, and comfortable. She liberated successful, independent women from "the masculine corporate uniform." Her figure suit is casual chic. In 1988, she started DKNY, a less expensive brand more accessible to the masses.

Perhaps in recognition of the global success and preeminence of American fashion design and designers, but certainly not in any recognition of the fact that some Americans designers had reached the highest level of couture as practiced only heretofore in France, five American designers were invited to show their designs at Versailles in 1973 with five French designers. The occasion was actually a fundraising event for the Versailles Restoration Fund, but that Americans were showing their fashions in France was a revolutionary event. The American designers invited included Bill Blass, Anne Klein (Donna Karan filled in for her), Oscar de la Renta, Halston, and Stephen Burrows. Burrows had come to notice after he opened a New York boutique in 1970 and become famous for his chiffons, jersey dresses with lettuce hems, usually in red, and his bright colors. He dressed Cher and became the preferred designer of the disco scene. Thanks in part to the Versailles show, Burroughs became the first African American fashion designer to attain an international reputation. He now sells his lesser designs on television through the Home Shopping Network. With everyone assembled at the palace on November 28, the American designers showed their RTW, while the French designers—Yves Saint Laurent, Hubert Givenchy, Emanuel Ungaro, Pierre Cardin, and Christian Dior—showed their haute couture.[38]

While these noted fashion designers have been instrumental in developing an American look, in truth, there are many American looks, and designers are providing Americans with quite eclectic clothing choices. Carmen Webber and Carmia Marshall of Sistahs Harlem New York attempt to express in their fashions the experience and heritage of New York City's Harlem, from the people of the streets to the upper class. While their style is decidedly American, it is American in the sense that America is a fusion of cultures. One of their collections, for example, is called Rastafarian Street Punk. Tommy Hilfiger, on the other hand, wants his clothes to be fun and to be used to express individuality, a treasured American value. David Rodriguez, a Mexican American, opened his own label in 1998 and quickly became known for his sleek and sexy cocktail dresses as well as his red carpet ensembles. He came

out with a fur collection and accessories in 2005. Zac Posen made his name by designing nostalgic gowns worn by movie starlets to suggest their rightful places in Hollywood history. Mark Badgley and James Mischka are also bringing back classic Hollywood glamour in their designs. Michael Kors has been designing chic, upscale, luxurious classics for the jet set since 1981. Kors and Posen have used their success in women's wear to expand into men's wear. While Kors's designs have modern lines, Mary Ping, who launched her own label in 2001, based her designs on the lines of postmodern architecture and the shapes found in nature. Her silk and velvet gowns define chic in rich colors that are not necessarily beholden to symmetry. Luca Orlandi of Luca Luca designs flirtatious, very feminine dresses in bold colors that are inspired by abstract art. Ralph Rucci of Chado Ralph Rucci creates sculpted and sophisticated clothing with prints from his own artwork. His perfection got him invited to show his haute couture in Paris. Kenneth Cole began in the shoe business and continues to design shoes in addition to men's and women's wear that claim a contemporary urban inspiration with black jeans and crew neck sweaters. Born in Colombia and raised in Miami, Esteban Cortazar entered the fashion design business in 2002 at the age of 18. The bright colors of his fabulous gowns give away his consciously Spanish influences. Designer Maz Azria at BCBG combines the sophistication of Europe with the spirit of America in his fashions, which stretch to denim, footwear, and fragrances.[39]

Fashions, like hairstyles, are safe, nonpermanent ways for Americans to express themselves. Take the curious American invention of blue jeans. Levi Strauss began supplying jeans to miners shortly after the California Gold Rush began in 1848. In the 1870s, he and his partner had perfected the jeans known today by reinforcing stress points with rivets. Jeans, both pants and overalls, became and remain the uniform of Americans who work with their hands—farmers, steel workers, assembly line workers, construction workers, miners, cowboys. In the 1950s, they were appropriated by some youths as a symbol of their personal disaffection. Movies passed on the message. In the 1960s and 1970s, however, in one of those strange turns in American political history, jeans became the symbol of the youth culture and its imagined solidarity with working people, a solidarity not sought by most working people. War protesters in blue jeans filled television news stories, but jeans now had taken on a different look. Bell-bottoms and flower and bead designs were in, and the scruffier the pants, the more they were in. By the 1980s, fashion designers had figured out that blue jeans could be cool, even if stonewashed and with holes in the knees. A pair of fashion designer branded jeans could fetch thousands of dollars, even while most Americans were satisfied with a $12 pair of Levis.

Levi's jeans are still one of America's most popular brands. © AP Photo/Eric Risberg.

The 1990s saw the reappropriation of blue jeans into urban fashion. Leading the charge were the hip-hop artists, the rappers. These blue jeans were not sleek designer jeans fit to accentuate the buttocks, but to hide them in loose-fitted, baggy pants worn low on the hips to expose underwear pants and gathered over the ankles. With sneakers, T-shirt, a hoodie, flashy large jewelry, and a baseball cap worn sideways or backward, or a do-rag, jeans helped to make a new fashion statement. This fashion, associated with the pimps and hos of dangerous, young, urban African American and Latino gangsterism, quickly found its way into teenage fashion of all races in all places.

Fashion is changeable as the wind. Teenage fashion is especially fickle. The fortunes of clothing retailers like Abercrombie & Fitch, the Gap, and American Eagle Outfitters that cater to teens rise and fall on the ability of its buyers to catch the wave of what is hot in that season. Large discount retailers have sought to associate themselves with celebrities and fashion design houses to ratchet up their marketing campaigns and increase their profits and cachet. Actress Jaclyn Smith, who rose to fame in the original *Charlie's Angels* television show, has been selling her line of clothing at K-Mart for over 20 years. It has sales of about $300 million a year.[40] Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen, the Olsen twins, used their celebrity for many auxiliary enterprises, including a line of preteen and young teen clothing sold in Wal-Mart stores. In 2003,

Isaac Mizrahi began designing clothing for Target. Like many fashion designers, Mizrahi continues to work in high fashion, but these cheaper designs produce a big bottom line. Noted designer Vera Wang followed Mizrahi into the mass retail trade in the fall of 2007 with a less expensive line of sportswear, intimate apparel, handbags, and leather accessories along with jewelry, furniture, towels, and lines for the moderately priced Kohl's chain. J. C. Penney has filled its clothing racks with private store labels, and in 2005, Wal-Mart even introduced "Metro 7," its own brand of urban fashion.

The tremendous influx of Hispanics into the United States created a large new market of Latinas, who have proved to be quite fashion conscious. Studies have shown, for example, that 57 percent of Hispanic women preferred clothing that looked better on them for an evening out eating and dancing than clothing that was more comfortable. White and African American women much preferred the more comfortable clothing, at the rates of 45 percent and 46 percent. Hispanic women also spent on average 135.1 minutes in stores shopping for clothing, beating out white women at 89.4 minutes and African American women at 109.27 minutes. In addition, more Hispanic women than the other ethnic groups were likely to use the Internet to shop for apparel.[41] Put all together, this means that Latinas are likely to spend more on clothing. Given $500, a 2004 study indicated, Latinas would spend $305.33 on clothes, whereas African American women would spend $297.51 and white women only $219.58.[42]

Armed with this information, retailers have gone after the Latina market. Celebrity and model Daisy Fuentes teamed up with Regatta to design low-priced clothing with a little salsa for Kohl's. Mexican-born pop music star Thalia Sodi sells her collection of spicy and flirtatious clothing through K-Mart. Color, lace, beads, hoop earrings, and tight-fitting jeans are in. Sears teamed up with Latina Media Ventures, publisher of *Latina Magazine,* to introduce a full line of Latina fashion, shoes, jewelry, and accessories into its stores. Latina fashions are proving to have a large appeal beyond their originally targeted market.

Movie stars are famous for plugging fashion designers on the red carpet runways of such events as the televised Emmy and Academy Award shows. Media representatives dutifully ask them, "Who are you wearing?" and the stars dutifully tell them. While they are selling high fashion at high prices in the Hollywood glamour tradition, it is the rock bands and rappers who establish for teenagers what is cool, and it is the teens who push new looks for their generation. These days, a band or group is not only a musical ensemble, but also a marketing concept. With a market in the United States alone of hundreds of billions of dollars (and American music goes around the world quickly), a fractional percentage of total market sales could establish a successful brand.

Entrepreneur Russell Simmons, a pioneer of hip-hop and cofounder of Def Jam Recordings, among other things, started Phat (for "pretty hot and tempting") Farm Fashions LLC in 1992. With a combination of preppy and hip-hop clothing lines, Russell reached annual sales of $250 million when he sold his clothing line in 2004 for $140 million. Rapper Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter, now CEO of Def Jam Recordings, started Rocawear in 1999. It epitomizes urban fashion, the look of the street, the look of the rappers with their baggy jeans hanging on their hips, exposed underwear, hoodies, and loose-hanging shirts. The women's wear sparkles with sequins and rhinestones. With more than $350 million in sales, Rocawear has signed deals with Tiffany & Co. for luxury accessories and has a licensing deal with Pro-Keds sneakers. There are lines even for toddlers and infants. Things are changing, however, for Rocawear. Noting that once he hit the 30-year mark, he could not show his underwear anymore, Carter has come out with a Custom Fit label meant to appeal to a more mature (older) population. The closer-fitting jeans, shirts, and track jackets look more traditional and only suggest the urban fashion look of an earlier era.[43] Designer Marc Ecko, with his M.E. and Cut and Sew lines, is also trying to bridge the gap between urban and preppy with tailored but comfortable clothing.

Russell Simmons and his former wife Kimora Lee Simmons pose with their children after the debut of one of their fashion collections. © AP Photo/Richard Drew.

If any proof were needed that urban culture and clothing had become mainstream America, certainly Sean "P. Diddy" Combs's receipt of the 2004 Council of Fashion Designers of America Men's Wear Designer of the Year award would be enough. Combs started Sean John in 1998. With this success, he designed a women's line that is both sophisticated and grounded in street culture. Sean John's retail sales exceed $450 million.

Rappers have taken to fashion. Eminem has his brand Shady Ltd. that sells beanies, his famous knit scullcap, T-shirts with logos, sweatshirts, and baggy jeans. St. Louis rapper Cornell "Nelly" Haynes Jr. actually started his men's line, Vokal, before he hit the music scene big in 2000. His football jerseys, sweatpants, jeans, and tracksuits are meant to be clothes that speak for themselves. His later women's line, Apple Bottoms, features sexy slim jeans, V-necked hoodies, flounce skirts, tanks, and tube dresses. Gwen Stefani's L.A.M.B. collection has sales of around $20 million and includes fleece and leopard hoodies as well as plaid jumpsuits and a line of rock 'n' roll clothes. Jennifer Lopez, with partner Andy Hilfiger, have turned their Sweetface Fashion business, started in 2001, into a $500 million business with about a dozen different lines that cover head to toe. Even Justin Timberlake, former Mouseketeer, has a clothing line of T-shirts, jeans, and knits called William Rast, a label he hopes to make a major brand.[44]

American fashion, no matter the price point, represents the liberation of self-expression from old norms and mores. Americans can dress like modern-day cowboys and cowgirls or Hollywood stars, or gangstas, if they like. Young men can show off their underwear and young women their midriffs, or teenagers can demonstrate their inevitable alienation from everything of their parents' generation in grunge or goth or punk—about anything goes fashion-wise in America. What most Americans really want in their dress, however, is comfort and flexibility, which is what American designers have given them. Everyday dress in the workplace remains rather traditional—men in business suits, women in business suits and conservative suits and dresses—but even there, old standards have been put into question with the growth of the casual Fridays movement. At home and at leisure, however, the sweatpants and sweatshirts, the jeans, the shorts and the T-shirts come out. That is the American look.

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6

Literature

William P. Toth

In the year 2006, one of the top best sellers in bookstores across the United States (with over a half million sales) was the *Far Side Boxed Calendar*. The vast majority of the sales in bookstores, however, were actually for books. The Book Industry Study Group has projected 2.5 billion books to be sold in 2006, this despite a trend toward less time spent reading (101 hours per person in 1995 compared to 84 hours per person projected for 2006).[1]

Prognosticators have also looked into their crystal balls and seen trends in the publishing world: more fragmentation, rather than the current consolidation of publishing houses. Publishing in the United States is still dominated by six publishing houses: Random House, Pearson, von Holtzbrinck, Time-Warner, HarperCollins, and Simon & Schuster. There are small press, professional, academic, and numerous other kinds of publishers as well, but even they have been thinned out. This is a trend that has been ongoing for about the past 30 years, but this may be coming to an end as high-tech alternatives to book publishing, such as print-on-demand (POD), portable document format (PDF), and other means of self-publishing, become more popular. Furthermore, thanks to newer means of distribution, especially the Internet, smaller publishing companies can now afford to compete in the market.

Another populist trend is the Oprah Winfrey Book Club. Beginning in September 1996, Oprah Winfrey began to recommend a book a month to her audience of 20 million viewers. She then featured a discussion of the book and author interviews. It has proven to be a powerful book-selling phenomenon. For instance, one of the first books she featured, Jacquelyn Mitchard's

The Deep End of the Ocean, went from a pre-Oprah run of 68,000 books to a post-Oprah run of 4 million and a spot on the *New York Times* bestseller list. The success of her book club has made book clubs in general popular.

Whether the publishing is traditional or part of the new media, it still includes traditional poetry and drama as well as many types of traditional prose, both fiction and nonfiction. One of the modern, nontraditional trends is to blur the distinction between fiction and nonfiction as exemplified by the movement known as creative nonfiction. American literature and even journalism are subject to the same creative impulse that has driven painters, sculptors, musicians, film directors and other artists to break down the old structures and barriers, throw out the old rules, and create new ones. This blurring usually leads to interesting, lively, and exceptional literature, but it also can lead to controversy when fiction creeps too strongly into something that is categorized as nonfiction. For example, several newspaper journalists—using creative nonfiction techniques—in the last few years have been fired or resigned when their editors found out that articles they had written were partially fiction, not just in technique but also in content.

Literature is not always contained in books—there is also performance literature, some traditional, like the theater, and some nontraditional, like slam poetry. Both can exist in book form, but most people experience them through live performances. That is their natural state, and they, too, are important parts of the contemporary American literary scene.

Poetry

The Oral Tradition Goes Hip-Hop

Chicago can be a rowdy town. The words *poetry* and *rowdy* do not traditionally mix, but in November 1984, poets gathering on Monday nights at the Get Me High Jazz Club on the west side of Chicago changed that perception and started a national trend. Breaking from the tradition of polite, serious, and sedate poetry readings, they decided to declaim poetry while walking on bar counters and bar stools, performing and interacting with their audience. Remarkably, this craziness caught on. It became so popular that the poetry gatherings moved to larger digs, the Green Mill Cocktail Lounge, and turned the readings into a competition. The Chicago Poetry Ensemble, led by poet Marc Kelly Smith, called it the Uptown Poetry Slam. Thus began one of the popular contemporary trends in poetry: public, competitive poetry readings, also known as poetry slams.

To be accurate, the oral tradition is as old as poetry itself. The likes of Homer and Sappho performed for audiences, telling tales of valor, fate, and

Suheir Hammad, Beau Sia, and Georgia Me perform in the Def Poetry Jam in New York. © AP Photo/Robert Spencer.

love. The poets of ancient Greece did not, of course, compete for Twinkies, boxes of macaroni and cheese, lottery tickets, or—the biggy—a $10 bill. Nevertheless, these were the much coveted prizes at the early poetry slams.

Smith and the Ensemble (formed in 1985) turned their Monday night readings into a cultural phenomenon and gave slam a mission. The mission was, in part, to turn as large a part of the population of the country as possible into not only lovers of poetry, but also creators of poetry. No longer was poetry limited to the academy and to the insular world of literary magazines and small presses. Now, anyone with the guts to get on stage could be part of the poetry scene. True, they might get booed off the stage, but then again, they might end up eating a Twinkie as well.

So how popular and far-reaching is the poetry slam today? Eighty-four-year-old Doris Gayzagian (her first book was published in 2006) is a regular at the Chelmsford Public Library's poetry slam. The National English Association promotes slam poetry in high schools. It found a niche on television in HBO's *Def Poetry Jam,* which then became a Broadway Tony Award–winning production, *Russell Simmons' Def Poetry Jam on Broadway.* There is even a *Complete Idiot's Guide to Slam Poetry* (written by Marc Kelly Smith and Joe Kraynak).

The poetry itself is often socially oriented, often political, often angry. Some of it arrogantly mocks W. H. Auden's line that "poetry makes nothing happen." The worst of it, like the worst of any art form, is ephemeral: there

is nothing there that will be of any human importance beyond the immediate moment. Yet some of it captures—without dissecting—truly human moments that promise universality and timelessness. While the poetics might sometimes be thin, there is another dimension to be considered: the performance itself.

This is poetry that is performed on Broadway stages, television, auditorium stages, and small stages in bars and bookstores. This fact creates an added dimension to the poetry—it is more than just the words; it is also the delivery. On one extreme, the delivery can be graceful and poignant; on the other extreme, it can be like a tuning fork hit with a sledge hammer. The best performance artists use the tools of the actor or the comedian—and all are voice musicians. The star poets are most often the champions of either the National Poetry Slam or the Individual World Poetry Slam.

The National Poetry Slam began in 1990 as part of a poetry festival held in San Francisco. The next year, it took on a life of its own. It has been held every year since at various cities across the country, in Asheville, Ann Arbor, Seattle, and Chicago, among others. It is now a 16-year tradition as well as a happening. The competition is held over four nights and includes team competition—group poems, sometimes choral, but also punctuated with solos, much like a jazz performance—and an individual competition. The Individual World Poetry Slam is a newer event. It began in 2004 and is an offshoot of the National Poetry Slam.

The spirit of slam poetry is to sidestep exclusivity and celebrate democracy, while passionately scorning the concept of the anointed few. Nevertheless, slam poetry has produced some stars and important figures. One is certainly Marc Kelly Smith, the originator of the poetry slam. Though not a competitor in any of the above poetry competitions, he is still a compelling performance poet. He was born in 1950 in Avalon Park, a neighborhood of Chicago. His roots are blue collar, and his speech—pure Chicago dialect—supports this. He first became interested in writing poetry in 1969, at age 19, because (he says) his wife was a poet. He took some classes in literature and a few in writing, but considers himself self-taught. His first poetry reading was at the Left Bank Bookstore in Oak Park, Illinois, where he claimed to have hidden his poems in a newspaper. From this experience and from attending other poetry readings, he came to the conclusion that street conversations were more interesting than poetry readings. While he was learning his craft, he worked as a construction worker. Then, in 1984, he quit to become a full-time poet, and the rest is slam poetry history.

Smith is humble about his poetic abilities (which he considers to be a little above average) but forthright about his role in the creation of slam poetry and its democratization of poetry. He eschews the connection (often

made) between the beatniks and slam poetry—he considers the beatniks to have been social dropouts. For him, slam poetry is more akin to the Socialist movement and folk artists like Pete Seeger. Still, often, when he is performing at the Green Mill, he is accompanied by a jazz group called the Pong Unit, thus, ironically, beating the jazzy, bongo beats at their own game.

The subject of many of Smith's poems is Chicago itself: its people, its sights, its sounds. The scene for his poem "Peanuts," for instance, is outside one of Chicago's baseball stadiums. As the narrator of the poem perches himself on a fire hydrant, and as the barking voice of the peanut vender intermittently calls out, he notes the characters around him: cops, fathers and sons, and even a peroxide blond eating a Polish sausage. Some of his other topics are Chicago's famous El train, street musicians, bicycle messengers, and jazz music. The poem he considers his best is titled "My Father's Coat." This is a moving, deceptively complex poem that revolves around the central metaphor of his father's coat and deals with relationships and generations. Equally good is his poem "Small Boy," which deals with three generations, intermingled in memories of childhood captured in a photo.

Like Smith, Bob Holman does not compete directly in any of the national competitions, but he is also a slam impresario of the first magnitude. Holman is the Don King of poetry, promoting himself as well as slam. Born in 1948 in LaFollette, Tennessee, he grew up in New Richmond, Ohio, just east of Cincinnati and across the river from Kentucky. He went to college at Columbia and was highly influenced by Alan Ginsberg and, in turn, by Walt Whitman. He claims to have moved to New York City with a copy of Ginsberg's *Howl* in his back pocket.

Holman coproduced the PBS series *United States of Poetry* and has been extremely active in the promotion of slam and of poetry in general (he did the program *Poetry Spots* for WNYC-TV, was the founding editor of NYC Poetry Calendar, was curator for the People's Poetry Gathering, was founder of the St. Mark's Poetry Project, and much more). For slam poetry, he helped to reopen the Nuyorican Poets Café and is the proprietor of the Bowery Poetry Club. Both establishments host poetry slams and are poetry hot spots in New York City. Most of Holman's poetic style is heavily derived from Ginsberg and Whitman, and at times, he overuses the repetition of words. He is famous for his poem "DiscClaimer," which he reads before every slam that he hosts. In it, he describes slam poetry as "space shots into consciousness" and declares that the best poet always loses.

"Mighty" Mike McGee is the 2003 winner of the individual title at the National Poetry Slam, the 2006 winner of the Individual World Poetry Slam, and a frequent guest on HBO's *Def Jam Poetry.* Born in 1976 at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, he dropped out of college in 1998 and became part of

the slam poetry scene in San Jose, California. McGee has an engaging style, laced with a strong dose of humor, and a definite stage presence. With his trademark chin beard and black framed glasses, he eases up to the microphone, and with a somewhat rotund middle section, tells the audience—with a saxophone-like voice and a comedian's sense of timing and rhythm—about his eating duel with death, as related in his poem "Soul Food."

McGee's poetry is also capable of moving beyond Dante-like food fights and into the area of lyrical love poems, like "Open Letter to Neil Armstrong," in which he plays off the clichés of the moon, love, and the stars. He calls himself a traveling poet; he claims that since 2003, he has toured over 170,000 miles throughout the United States and Canada. This is one of the marks of slam stars: they go on the road with bookings in venues all across the country (and even into other countries). The venues might be public libraries, coffeehouses, universities, slam events, bars (like the Green Mill), or even prisons. Like many of the contemporary slam poets, McGee cuts his own CDs, laces the Internet with MP3 files of his spoken word art, and even has a very charming and winning pod cast.

Born in Shreveport, Louisiana, in 1974, Buddy Wakefield was raised in Baytown, Texas, and graduated from Sam Houston State University in 1997. Until 2001, he worked for a biomedical firm. Then, like Marc Kelly Smith, he gave it all up to become a professional performance poet. He is the 2004 and 2005 Individual World Poetry champion. Like most of the really good slam poets, his on-stage presence is unique. Most often, he stands on the stage, feet together, arms extended (or animated), pulsing with emotion. He has what might be called the Wakefield growl as he roars through individual words and frequently peppers his presentation with Texas *y'all*s. His poems, like "Convenience Stores," often tell stories of lonely people briefly connecting. "Guitar Repair Woman" is a humorous paean to his mother, where he says that he is striving to get comfortable in the skin his mother gave him. And in "Flockprinter," his championship poem from the 2005 Individual World Poetry Championship, he traces a man's life searching for love through a torrent of images and metaphors.

Anis Mijgani was born and raised in New Orleans and attended the Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, Georgia. He graduated with a bachelor of fine arts degree in sequential art, focusing in on comic book design, which he says taught him about engaging the audience and about structure. He then worked on his master's of fine arts in media and performing arts. He is the 2005 and 2006 National Poetry Slam individual champion.

On stage, he sometimes looks like Alan Ginsberg on a bad hair day, hands in pocket, slim and with a direct and sincere passion. His poetry is inspirational and his poems explore how to live and how to have faith, depth, and

meaning in your life. Mijgani is distinguished from many of his fellow slam poets in that faith, the search for something beyond human pleasure, does play a significant part in his poetry. He addresses the young, the old, the awkward, the disenfranchised, those who might have doubts or who might have given up hope.

Patricia Smith is perhaps the most traditionally literary of the popular slam poets. Born in Chicago in 1950, Smith is a four-time individual winner of the National Poetry Slam (1990, 1992, 1993, and 1995). She also has four books of poetry published: *Life According to Motown* (1991), *Big Towns, Big Talk* (1992), *Close to Death* (1993), and *Teahouse of the Almighty* (2006). *Teahouse* was chosen for the National Poetry Series.

Her subject matter often deals with the tragedy, the unfulfilled dreams, and the limitations of everyday life, often focusing on the life of African Americans, but there is universality about her poetry and an appeal that goes beyond race. Often, there is an edgy—verging on bitter—humor in her poetry. She is a powerful performer and powerful poet, steeped in tradition. In "Medusa," for instance, she takes the persona of the mythical character Medusa, putting a modern spin on her; in this case, she is a cocky, streetwise Medusa who seduces Poseidon. In "Related to the Buttercup, Blooms in Spring," Smith writes about how she came to poetry as a child, giving the advice that the writer must learn to love language, word by word. Her own language is one of vivid, precise words, rhythmic and melodious. Smith's own voice might best be described as one that speaks an honest, true picture of the world around her.

Poetry in Books Is Alive and Well

The written word in poetry is not dead, despite the popularity of slam (or perhaps because of the popularity of slam). Connoisseurs of written word poetry (as well as academics) claim, with some justification, that the overall quality of written poetry is higher than slam. In any case, people continue to purchase books of poetry, though not at the pace of best-selling prose books. For instance, best-selling poet Billy Collins's combined book sales for four books (tabulated in April 2005) was 400,000, whereas John Grogan's nonfiction best seller *Marley and Me* sold 1,307,000 copies from November 2005 through December 2006.

Bookseller statistics show that the two most widely purchased poets in the United States at this time are Mary Oliver and the previously mentioned Billy Collins. Both have had multiple books in the poetry top 30 list for the entire year (2006). There are other active poets who have dominated the top seller list as well. These include Donald Hall, Ted Kooser, Louise Glück, and Claudia Emerson.

In addition to these active poets, there are a number of deceased poets who readers still consider vital enough to purchase, and thus they, too, have been on the best seller list for a good portion of the year 2006. These include the beatnik poets Jack Kerouac and Alan Ginsberg as well as Sylvia Plath, Elizabeth Bishop, and Charles Bukowski. These four poets seem to suggest that there is a portion of the poetry reading public who are attracted to the message of rebelliousness, whether it be beatnik, bohemian, or feminist.

Some of these poets see despair, some loneliness; some are angry at injustice, some see transcendent beauty in nature, some argue for social change, and all know something about love and personal loss.

Mary Oliver, born in 1935 in Maple Heights, Ohio, began to write poetry at age 13. Immediately after graduating from high school, she left Ohio and drove to the home of Edna St. Vincent Millay in Austerlitz, New York. She ended up working for Millay's sister as her secretary for a short while. She then entered Ohio State University in 1955. She spent two years there and then transferred to Vassar. She remained there for only one year and quit to concentrate on writing. Oliver has won many awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1984 for her third book, *American Primitives.* In 2006, she had seven books on the poetry best seller list, including a new book, *Thirst.*

Oliver is typically described as a nature poet. In comparing her very early works, like *The River Styx, Ohio* (1972)—which is filled with portraits of ancestors—to her newer works, it seems that people have gradually disappeared from her poetry. Her poetry would not be so popular, however, if it were just the "roses are red, violets are blue" kind of poetry. She is, as Billy Collins has noted about poetry in general, interested in seeing life through the viewpoint of mortality. This is not a negative vision. For her, there is a power and a magic and a beauty in nature. It is her ability to create this sensibility in her poems that no doubt draws readers to them. They are mysterious, philosophical, fairy tale–like observations of the natural world, meditations that contrast nature with the world of ambition, greed, and selfishness. These objects in the natural world, as she has said herself, praise the mystery. In *Thirst,* there is a growing connection between this mystery and God. In the title poem "Thirst," she writes about waking with a thirst for a goodness she does not possess, juxtaposing love for the earth against love of God. In the opening poem of the book ("Messenger"), Oliver claims her work is to love the world and to learn to be astonished by it. Her poetry conveys to the reader this sense of astonishment.

Billy Collins was born in New York City in 1941. He went to College of the Holy Cross and, for graduate school, the University of California, Riverside. He has been the recipient of many awards, including the Poet Laureate from 2001 until 2003. During 2006, he had four books on the poetry best

seller list, including his newest, *The Trouble with Poetry and Other Poems,* which was the number one seller.

People like to say that Collins writes humorous poetry. In truth, humor is often a vehicle for serious consideration. Though there are poems, such as "Another Reason Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House," which is about the neighbor's barking dog, and which can only be seen as humorous, other poems, like "The Death of Allegory," are something more. There is humor there: the Virtues are retired in Florida, but there is the realization (created through a humor that is slightly acerbic) that the world is worse off without them.

Since the title of Collins's new book of poetry is *The Trouble with Poetry,* interviewers like to ask him just exactly what the trouble with poetry is. He will often answer that it is pretentiousness, an attempt to be more difficult than necessary; that it is poetry, as he says in the poem "Introduction to Poetry," that needs to be tied to a chair and tortured until it confesses its truth. He admits that when he first started writing poetry, he wrote like that, but in the title poem of *The Trouble with Poetry,* the trouble described is more pleasant. The trouble is that the writing of poetry encourages the writing of more poetry, poetry that can bring either joy or sorrow. It fills him with the urge to sit down and await the muse so that another poem can be written.

Donald Hall, the 2006 Poet Laureate, was born in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1928. He is the most senior of the best-selling authors. Hall is the recipient of many awards besides Poet Laureate. He had an exceptional education, attending the famous prep school Exeter Phillips, then Harvard, Oxford (England), and Stanford. Hall is a prolific writer, excelling in a number of genres. His newest book, *White Apples and the Taste of Stone: Selected Poems 1946–2006,* was a best seller most of the year in 2006. As the title states, this book presents the greater part of his entire career as a poet. With a prolific, long career such as his, there are bound to be many styles of poetry in a book of his collected poems. His poetry often touches on personal relationships and family relationships in a rural New Hampshire setting, where his grandparents owned a farm and where he came to live after he left his teaching job at Michigan State in Ann Arbor. His topics are varied: baseball, poetry itself, Mount Kearsarge, his late wife, the poet Jane Kenyon, loss, death, and the sweep of time.

Another poet who also sees the sweep of time is Ted Kooser. A native of Ames, Iowa, Kooser was born in 1939. Thoroughly a man of the Great Plains, Kooser attended Iowa State and the University of Nebraska. For 35 years, he worked as an insurance executive, retiring in 1998 after a bout with throat cancer. He was named Poet Laureate in 2004. He won the Pulitzer Prize for *Delights and Shadows* in 2005. Many of Kooser's poems are meditations on relatives (most of whom were farmers) and on everyday objects, objects that one might find in a rural antique shop, at a yard sale, or at a county fair. He

has said that he is most interested in writing about the so-called ordinary. He has the ability to take a simple object like a pegboard or a casting reel and telescope a sense of time and human connectedness with it. For example, his poem "At the County Museum" notices the black, horse-drawn hearse that has seen a hundred years of service. The poet's eye sees not just the object, but the generations of people who have driven the hearse and who have been carried by the hearse. And, by extension, the metaphor telescopes to include all of mankind. It has been said that Kooser writes about the point where the local and the eternal meet.

Less upbeat than any of the previous poets, Louise Glück was born in New York City in 1943. She attended Sarah Lawrence and Columbia. In 1993, she won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, and in 2003, she was named Poet Laureate. She, like all of these poets, is the winner of many other literary awards. Her new book, *Averno,* is what put her on the contemporary best seller list. Some commentators have said that certain lines from Glück's poetry could be used as the basis of a philosophy class. Nevertheless, some readers would find her less accessible than most of the popular contemporary poets. She is sparse, cerebral, and—some would say—gloomy. The classical story of Persephone is the myth that loosely ties the poems of *Averno* together. Like Persephone, the persona of the poems is isolated and caught, seemingly, between worlds. While the tone of the poems is bleak, the totality of them, the artistic structure on which they are built, is a thing of beauty—and all the more so for being placed in an existential desert.

Claudia Emerson is more accessible than Glück. Born in Chatham, Virginia, in 1957, Emerson obtained her undergraduate degree from the University of Virginia. She then spent a number of years not writing poetry, but instead doing odd jobs like rural letter carrier and manager in a used book store. She returned to school at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro to work on her master's of fine arts and began writing poetry. She has since published three books of poetry. She received the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for her best-selling book of poetry *Late Wife,* admittedly autobiographical in nature. In simplistic terms, it is about her divorce, her psychological healing, and her new marriage. The formal titles of the sections are "Divorce Epistles," "Breaking Up the House," and "Late Wife: Letters to Kent." The setting for the poems is often rural Virginia, where she spent most of her life. The poetry in the book is a study of the triumphs and failures of love and of the meaning of loss. It is a book of poetry exploring many small, often domestic experiences, all the while coalescing painful experiences into poetry.

Another personal poet and an icon of the feminist movement, Sylvia Plath was born in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1932 and died in London in 1963. She attended Smith College and Cambridge University. One of the things

about her 2006 best seller that attracts readers is the fact that it is a so-called restored edition of her final book of poems, *Ariel,* and that it has been restored by her daughter, Frieda Hughes. Hughes argues that her mother's poetry should be seen in the widest sense possible—as works of art—and not solely in a narrow way (i.e., as a battle cry for the women's movement). At the same time, she honors her mother's integrity and aesthetic sensibility by presenting *Ariel* exactly as her mother had instructed. For some, this focus on the aesthetic, rather than on the politics, of her poetry is a controversial stance. Hughes had been attacked by some of the British public and much of the press for not allowing a plaque to be placed in the house where Plath committed suicide—which for some people represents a final defiant act, an ultimate political statement. Instead, Hughes wanted it placed in the house where her mother was the most productive and happiest.

Plath's poetry in *Ariel* is strong, even viscous. It is certainly easy to see why some might connect it to a rebellion against male oppression. She describes her relationship with her husband, the British poet Ted Hughes, as equivalent to being filled by the constriction. Most dramatically, there is the famous poem, "Daddy," that compares her German father to the Nazis. Hughes hints in her introduction that the origin of her mother's anger is more complex than male oppression alone and certainly closely related to Plath's lifelong battle with severe depression. In any case, the poetry is still powerful and arresting.

A Pulitzer Prize winner for poetry, Elizabeth Bishop was the consummate artist and perfectionist. Born in 1911 in Worcester, Massachusetts, she died in 1979. Often, she would work on a poem for years (even decades) before she would publish it. The 2006 best-selling book *Edgar Allan Poe and the Juke-Box* is a compilation (often with photographs of various drafts of poems) of her unpublished works.

Bishop lived in many parts of the world and traveled extensively when she was young, visiting Europe, North Africa, and Mexico. Much of her poetry deals with this travel and often creates strong vignettes of place and sensibility. The two places where she lived that provided some of her best subject matter were Key West and Brazil. The title poem of the book is a good example of one of her Key West poems.

In "Edgar Allan Poe and the Juke-Box," Bishop paints a picture of mid-century Key West, sometimes seedy and certainly decadent. The setting is a honky-tonk, and the poem is a downward motion on many levels; Poe-like, it descends into the psyche. Almost all of works in the book are tone poems of place. In the books published while she was alive, she managed to refine out her own personal angst, leaving nothing but pure poetry. In many of these poems, the angst shows through. Despite the fact that she did not feel that

the poems were good enough (refined enough) for publication, many of the poems in *Edgar Allan Poe and the Juke-Box* are of high quality.

Jack Kerouac, along with Alan Ginsberg, represents the current culture's fascination with the beatnik and hippie generation. Kerouac was born in Lowell, Massachusetts, in 1922 and died in 1969. He began college at Columbia University on a football scholarship but dropped out after a dispute with his coach. While at Columbia, he made friends with some of the future elite of the beatnik and hippie generation: Alan Ginsberg, William S. Burroughs, and Neal Cassady. His education then truly began as he started his life "on the road." First, he joined the Merchant Marines and traveled to Greenland. Afterward, he traveled the road crisscrossing America, often with Neal Cassady.

Kerouac is famous for his novels, especially *On the Road,* and his poetry, as in *Mexico City Blues.* Though not quite as unfiltered and spontaneous as legend would have it, his writing technique was to write his final draft—even of some of his novels—in a single burst. He was just the opposite of Elizabeth Bishop. The writing was always based on years of notebook entries. This is the case with his recent best seller, *Book of Sketches.* This book is made up of 15 of his notebooks that he wrote between 1952 and 1954. In 1957, he typed up the pages but never published them. Just as the title implies, they are poetic word sketches of people and sights from his cross-country travels. To paraphrase painter George Condo (who wrote the introduction), Kerouac is the Charlie Parker of words, great at spur of the moment improvisations. There is a difference in these poems and his later works. Unlike the other beatniks, Kerouac was politically conservative during the 1960s; in fact, he supported the Vietnam War. In these poems, on the other hand, there is more of the typical beatnik criticism of American culture.

Alan Ginsberg, whom the *New York Times* called the "poet laureate of the Beat Generation," was born in 1926 in Newark, New Jersey. He died in 1997. Ginsberg attended Columbia University and, like Jack Kerouac, spent time in the Merchant Marines traveling to the Atlantic and Gulf coasts and to Africa. He is known for his book *Howl,* which became the object of a major twentieth-century freedom of speech battle. He became an icon for the hippie generation and a major protestor against the Vietnam War. Readers are now drawn to his book *Collected Poems 1947–1997.* It is chronologically arranged by each of his published books and, of course, includes the famous book (and poem) *Howl,* which, in many ways, became the emotional manifesto for the entire beatnik generation.

Of the deceased poets, Charles Bukowski is perhaps the most popular with contemporary readers. The fact that he had four books in the top 50 list for a single year (2006), *Slouching toward Nirvana: New Poems; Come On In;*

Sifting through the Madness for the Word, the Line, the Way; and *The Flash of Lightning behind the Mountain,* says something for his staying power and for his fascination for the contemporary reading public. He was born in 1920 in Andernach, Germany, to an American serviceman and a German mother, and he died in 1994.

Some people like to lump Bukowski in with the beatnik poets—mostly because he was writing at about the same time they were—but he is really a thing unto himself. He attended Los Angeles City College for two years, but never graduated. He suffered psychologically from an acute case of acne that disfigured his face and worked a series of often menial jobs: factory worker, warehouse worker, store clerk, and postal worker. Gradually, Bukowski became a prolific poet, short story writer, journalist, novelist, playwright, and screen writer. His poetry is edgy, raw, and often brutally honest. There is sex, drinking, belligerence, fighting, and escapes from landlords who want their money. There is, at the same time, often a sensitivity and sadness.

There are many other poets of note who are widely read and currently popular. These include Brian Turner, Jane Hirshfield, Mary Karr, Wendell Berry, Galway Kinnell, Jim Harrison, Jack Gilbert, Jane Kenyon, Franz Wright, Stanley J. Kunitz, Naomi Shihab Nye, Kay Ryan, David Tucker, W. S. Merwin, Sharon Olds, Richard Wilbur, Richard Siken, Mark Strand, and Charles Simic.

In addition, there are classic poets who continue to be anthologized and to influence contemporary poets. For example, Walt Whitman (1819–1872) is a kind of grandfather for American poetry. His free verse style infused poetry with raw power and natural speech. Emily Dickinson (1830–1886) is also considered one of America's first true poets, but unlike Whitman she was quiet and nonostentatious and used traditional forms instead of free verse. Ezra Pound (who was politically controversial) was not only a great poet but also an innovator and mentor to many of America's finest poets. He was born in 1885 and died in 1972. T. S. Eliot (1885–1965) wrote one of the most famous and difficult modernist poems, "The Waste Land," in 1922. Robert Frost (1874–1963) is still one of the most popular poets in America and is considered by some to be the first poetry "super star." And finally, Langston Hughes (1902–1967) brought the jazz beat to poetry and was part of the Harlem Renaissance.

Drama

It was not until the twentieth century that America had any significant playwrights. This past century (as well as the current one) has seen a number of writers who are often read and studied, including Eugene O'Neill,

Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Edward Albee, August Wilson, and Wendy Wasserstein. Their plays are included in many drama anthologies and often appear in print as single plays. The themes reflected in these dramas are in large part a history of the breakdown of traditional, inherited values. Received ideas about religion, the traditional family, sexuality, gender, capitalism, and patriotism, among others, come under sharp, critical attack or analysis in many of these plays.

New York City native Eugene O'Neill (1888–1953) was really the first of the American dramatists who contemporary readers find important. He won four Pulitzer Prizes for Drama and is the only American dramatist to win the Nobel Prize in Drama. While O'Neill often wrote realistic plays, he also realized that the melodrama and farce (those forms used up to this point) were insufficient to create great drama. He frequently turned, instead, to Greek tragedy for structure and sometimes plotline (as in *Mourning Becomes Electra* in 1931). He also introduced experimental techniques like expressionism that helped to articulate psychological truths. As with many writers, he was influenced by the ideas of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and—in his case—Friedrich Nietzsche. *Desire under the Elms* (1924) is another of his plays based on Greek tragedy and tells a story laced with oedipal complex tensions. The implied sexual taboos landed it in trouble with the police in New York City for its so-called immorality. His most famous play is *A Long Day's Journey into Night* (1956). It was not only a study of a dysfunctional family, but at the same time, it was also considered by many to be the best tragedy ever written by an American. It, too, dealt in part with the conflicts between fathers and sons.

Tennessee Williams (1911–1983), born in Columbus, Mississippi, also broke with many of the conventions of nineteenth-century theater, both stylistically and thematically. Some of his more prominent themes included the destructive tensions of family life and sexuality. He also broached many then taboo subjects like homosexuality and venereal disease. *The Glass Menagerie* (1945) was about the destructive nature of living according to false illusions. Only the play's narrator, Tom, can break free of the shackles of his repressive family situation. *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) was a much more sexually charged drama. Its three main characters, Stanley, Stella, and Blanche, have become part of American pop culture, and their interaction in the play displays the dynamics of raw sexual power.

Arthur Miller (1915–2005) was another New York City native. He graduated from the University of Michigan. Though he was a liberal socialist, and though his plays generally reflected his ideology, they nevertheless did not suffer from the didacticism of many socialist plays written in Communist countries. They stand as works of art on their own. For example, *Death of a*

Salesman (1949) can be seen as an indictment of capitalism, but it is also a tragedy of the average man disillusioned by the amoral forces of his world.

Another important contemporary American dramatist, August Wilson (1945–2005), was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He won the Pulitzer Prize twice, in 1987 for *Fences* and in 1990 for *The Piano Lesson.* Wilson was most famous for a cycle of 10 loosely interrelated plays, one for each decade of the twentieth century. The setting for most of the plays was Pittsburgh's Hill District, where he grew up. The plays dealt with the difficulties of living in a world where racism exists. The lead characters often had their ambitions and talents thwarted by racism. The final play in his series was *Radio Golf* in 2005. In this play, which takes place in 1997, Wilson explored the perils of losing one's ethnic identity.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Wendy Wasserstein (1950–2006) was possibly America's best known woman playwright in a field often dominated, on the commercial side (meaning Broadway), by men. She attended Mount Holyoke College, City College of New York, and Yale University. She is considered a pioneer in the portrayal of contemporary women—those struggling with independence, ambition, and traditional values of romance and family. This is especially evident in her most famous play, *The Heidi Chronicles.*

This play won the Pulitzer Prize, the Tony Award for Best Play, and the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Play. In this work, the life of the lead character, Heidi Holland, was traced from the 1960s to the 1980s. She saw her friends go from the radicalism of the 1960s, to the feminist movement of the 1970s, and back to the traditions they claimed to have rejected. Wasserstein's first produced play, *Uncommon Women and Others,* appeared off Broadway at the Phoenix Theatre in 1977. That play had one of the characteristics of all of her plays—a comedic underpinning that featured a peppering of funny, satirical barbs.

The dean of current American playwrights, Edward Albee was born in 1928 in Washington, D.C. He was expelled from two private schools as a youth and then dropped out of Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. He is the only dramatist to have won the vote for the Pulitzer Prize, only to have it taken away before the award was given out—on the grounds that the 1962 play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?,* now a classic of the American theater, gave an unwholesome picture of America. During his long career, Albee has, among other things, helped to introduce absurdist theater to the United States. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?,* for example, presents the existential dilemma of living a life trapped in enervating illusions that keep the individual from authentic living. The two main characters, George and Martha, have gone to the absurd extreme of even pretending that they have

a child. This they do to fill their lives with meaning, until they realize that the imaginary child, now with them for 21 years, must be let go.

Prose

It is prose that sells the most books in the United States. It is highly diverse, made up of both fiction and nonfiction, and its most popular sellers are not always what most people would call literary.

There are two major ways to look at what is going on in fiction literature in contemporary America. First, there are anthologies and required readings: readings that are assigned in colleges and high schools across America. These are often not readings of choice, but instead readings that are required for a grade. This literature comes under what is known as the canon: the proscribed list of those works of high quality and an enduring value. These books would, in most people's minds, be considered classic or academically important or—as they may be in the most recent canons—politically and morally correct. Related to this, there is also a group of novels that are fairly current and that are considered literary by a number of serious critics. These novels have won prestigious literary awards but are not always popular with the general public.

Then there are the books that are made important by the general public: the works that are read by choice. These are gauged by popularity, that is, by book sales. Many of them may be forgotten in a few years, but they are, nevertheless, a measure of what contemporary America finds important, in kind if not in quality. The fact is, Americans love to read romance novels, science fiction, fantasy, horror, and mystery novels. Often, these subgenres (as with science fiction, fantasy, and mystery novels) are even taught in colleges and universities.

The Canon

So what is appearing in the anthologies? To a large extent, it is not what used to appear prior (roughly) to the 1990s. Beginning in the 1960s, literary scholars (those who make up the canon) began to attack the traditional canon as overly represented by "dead white men." The social forces of feminism and multiculturalism (related to both ethnic background and sexual preference) began to attack the older canon and gradually to substitute and expand the required reading list. Of course, this is not the first time that the canon has been altered, nor will it be the last. Literary reputations come and go as each generation or two searches for what it needs. Even many of the most historically famous of writers have wavered in importance over the years—Herman Melville, for one.

Today, there are two major anthologies that represent the canon and that are often the source for required readings in colleges: the *Norton Anthology* and the *Heath Anthology.* Both have a series of books, each representing a particular time period. For Norton (the more conservative of the two), there are still some writers from the older canon. In the contemporary edition, writers like Eudora Welty, John Updike, and Bernard Malumud are still represented, but there are also more African American writers, Native American writers, women writers, Asian American writers, and Hispanic American writers.

In Heath's contemporary edition, there are perhaps fewer male writers from the older canon than Norton's, but as in Norton's, multiculturalism and women writers are extensively represented. In addition, Heath's has a section on prison literature, a section called "Cold War Culture and Its Discontents," and a section called "A Sheaf of Vietnam Conflict Poetry and Prose."

There are also required books, especially in high schools. These are usually books that have become part the social and cultural identity of the country. These include such writers as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mark Twain, John Steinbeck, Harper Lee, J. D. Salinger, Alice Walker, and Toni Morrison. All of these writers are part of the contemporary American's literary experience. They can be seen—apart from their art—as reflections of a maturing national character, and possibly, they may have helped to shape that character.

An often assigned novel is Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter.* Hawthorne, who was born in 1804 in Salem, Massachusetts, and who died in 1864, is considered one of the first truly American writers, not just a writer imitating the English and European style, though as with any great artist, his works have universal dimensions. *The Scarlet Letter* (first published in 1850) is considered a psychological allegory. Among other things, it contrasts the European influence of a strict, community-centered society—Puritanism—with the developing American ethos of individuality and freedom. Hester Prynne and her daughter Pearl are used by society as moral objects, warnings to the rest of the citizens to stay within the bounds dictated by the Puritan code. Hester's dignity and good works defy the Puritan society's attempts to take her humanity away, and even when the elders decide to allow her to remove the scarlet letter, the symbol of her adultery, she refuses to allow them to dictate her actions and keeps the scarlet letter. The book also has profound things to say about sin and guilt and their psychological effects on a person. Perhaps most significantly, however, *The Scarlet Letter* also functioned, a mere 74 years after the Declaration of Independence, as an aesthetic declaration to the world that America's writers were independent, free, and capable of creating art that reflected the American experience.

Missouri-born Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens; 1835–1910) wrote a number of classics, but his most read book today is *Huckleberry Finn* (published

in 1884). It was published after the Civil War and during the corruption of Reconstruction and the Jim Crow laws. As anyone who has read it knows, this book is not about the sophisticated or Puritan culture of the East; it is a rollicking western-set comedy with a serious message.

While the society of *Huckleberry Finn* is not as extreme as the Puritanism of *The Scarlet Letter,* it is still one that tries to control and dehumanize. One of the major aspects of the novel is that Huck defies all "sivilizing" attempts, and in so doing defines an even better moral order, one that rejects racism and romantic, unrealistic, and debilitating ideals (such as Southern aristocracy). Twain's ideal America, seen in the guise of Huck, is one of individualism, fairness, and equality. It is an America where the individual thinks for himself and is suspicious of the boundaries of the so-called social norm. This is not to say that Twain saw America as actually living according to these standards, but his humor chastises and shows the way.

Another writer who is still read by contemporary readers is John Steinbeck, especially his book *Of Mice and Men,* first published in 1937, during the hard economic times of the Great Depression. Steinbeck was born in 1902. He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1962 and the Pulitzer Prize in 1940 (for *Grapes of Wrath*). He died in 1968. At the end of *Huckleberry Finn,* Huck sets out for the territories, where possibility and hope lie, but this idea of the American dream is cruelly dashed in *Of Mice and Men.* The Great Depression had made a mockery of it. Capitalism, human nature, and perhaps the universe itself have the power to inevitably crush anyone's dream. For the book's characters, for gentle giant Lenny, for George, Candy, and Crooks, life is not fair. Denied the dignity they deserve as human beings, they are inevitably dragged down a road toward a tragic, ironic fatality, where the best that can be affected is a rough kindness, a brutal, unsentimental kindness. The book's pathos serves as a powerful, emotional argument for human dignity. The reader is left to hope that ordinary people can have a life beyond the tragedy Steinbeck depicts.

Proving that Twain's antiracist message was little heeded, *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee was first published in 1960 in the midst of the country's most serious and effective attempt at instituting civil rights. Lee was born in 1926 in Monroeville, Alabama. She studied law (her father was a lawyer, a newspaperman, and a member of the state legislature) at the University of Alabama and then studied for a year at Oxford. After this, she took time to write her only novel. This book, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1961, is widely read by high school students across the country.

Though certainly more positive than Steinbeck, Lee's story clearly delineates the evil of racial prejudice and the destruction of innocence by evil (thus the central image of killing a mockingbird, an innocent creature of nature

that sings with beauty). Yet, like Twain, Lee has sketched a moral way out of hatred and ignorance. It is Atticus Finch (also a song bird) and his young daughter, Scout, who represent this way out. The book is, in large part, about moral education, as Atticus, a lawyer living in a small Alabama town, defends the falsely accused Tom Robinson and teaches his own children (especially Scout) and the town itself the way to justice and human dignity.

Another book often read by America's youth is J. D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* (first published in 1951). Salinger was born in 1919 in New York City. While his book was a best seller when it was first published, it actually gained popularity over time, becoming a cult classic for the 1960s generation and influencing its sensibilities. There is both a psychological, moral attraction to this book as well as an admired social criticism. With humor and poignancy, it portrays the pains of growing up in a modern America. Holden Caulfield, the 17-year-old main character and narrator, longs to be a "catcher in the rye," saving children before they fall to their death. The only question is whether Holden can save himself. Holden is also critical of superficial people, adults in general, the establishment, and phony, sell-out artists. These are all criticisms that the 1960s generation made famous.

And then there is Alice Walker's classic American novel *The Color Purple* (1982), which addresses the twin evils of racism and sexism. Born in 1944 in Eatonton, Georgia, the daughter of sharecroppers, Walker attended Spelman College and Sarah Lawrence College. She worked briefly as a social worker and then began writing, living for a while in Mississippi during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. There she experienced many of the indignities of racism, including having her marriage declared null by Mississippi law (where it was illegal to have a mixed race marriage). The book is more difficult than many read by students; it is in epistolary format (written as a series of letters) and touches on difficult and controversial topics. It obviously argues against racism and sexism, but also against submission of any human being to another, particularly women to men, and especially submission through violence. It also has the important message that love can redeem.

A final writer to be considered in this category is Toni Morrison, who was born in 1931 in Lorain, Ohio. She is the first African American woman to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature. She attended Howard University and Cornell. *Beloved* (1987), for which she won the Pulitzer Prize, is perhaps Morrison's most powerful book. With great emotional force, it reminds the reader of the destructive, dehumanizing effects of slavery on all people and is based on the true story of a runaway slave who murdered her own child (named "Beloved" in the book), rather than allowing her to be returned to slavery.

There are other classic fiction writers, in addition to those mentioned above, who still have an impact upon the contemporary reader. James Fenimore

Cooper (1789–1851) is today famous for his Leatherstocking Tales, especially *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), which explores the importance of the frontier and new beginnings to Americans. *Moby Dick* (1851), by Herman Melville (1819–1891), is outwardly an adventure tale, but in truth it is a difficult and long philosophical allegory. F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896–1940) explored the Jazz Age and all of its moral implications, especially in *The Great Gatsby* (1925). Richard Wright (1908–1960) provoked controversy with his now classic look at racism, *Native Son* (1940). Joseph Heller (1923–1999) fueled antiwar sentiments and introduced a phrase into the American vocabulary with his classic novel, *Catch 22* (1961).

Literary Fiction

An important question (one that would no doubt make for a good plotline in literary fiction) is what makes a book literary fiction, as opposed to popular fiction. The glib answer (and perhaps one not too far from the truth) is because the critics say so. Certainly these books are often difficult, they often eschew normal plotlines, they often put a premium on verbal fireworks, they are sometimes based on some obscure, difficult philosophy (preferably French), and they are often playful, especially with the concepts of reality. Unfortunately, they do not always give a very comfortable answer to the question, What does it mean to be a human being?

One of the better known writers of literary fiction (and more accessible to the average reader) is Philip Roth. In the public's mind, he is probably best known for *Goodbye Columbus* (1959) and, especially, *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969). Born in Newark, New Jersey, in 1933, Roth's latest book, *Everyman* (2006), presents a "medical biography," tracing the inevitable deterioration of a man's body, his struggles with sexual desire in old age, and his death—all seen from the bleak aspect of an atheist. *Portnoy's Complaint*—considered by many as scandalous in its day—is the confessions from a psychiatric couch of a man who is obsessed with the subject of masturbation. *The Breast* (1972) is a Kafka-like novel about a man who wakes up as a giant breast. Roth has also placed himself into one of his novels, *Operation Shylock* (1993). Many of his books are about topical American subjects and about the modern American Jew. Roth has won many awards for writing, including several National Book Awards and the Pulitzer Prize.

Perhaps the most private of literary authors (more private even than the reclusive J. D. Salinger) is Thomas Pynchon. He does not give interviews, let alone an address, and is rumored (and no one really knows) to be constantly on the move to avoid detection. Pynchon was born in 1937 in Long Island, New York. Extremely bright and precocious, he graduated with top honors from his high school at age 16. Pynchon was (and probably still is) a voracious reader. He has a background in engineering and in technical writing. All of

these things play a part in his novels. Most of his novels are long and labyrinthine in plot structure. The only exception to this is the highly comedic, but paranoid, *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966). This book is short and tightly plotted. His most famous book to date is *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973). Often compared to Melville's *Moby Dick* because of its complexity, length, and demonstration of encyclopedic knowledge, *Gravity's Rainbow* tells multiple stories centered on Nazi Germany and the building of the V-2 rocket. It satirizes contemporary culture and explores the relationship between death and sex. The book won a number of prestigious awards, including the National Book Award. The Pulitzer Prize advisory committee, on the other hand, turned it down, describing it with a series of adjectives: turgid, overwritten, obscene, and unreadable.

Also a satirist, Don DeLillo was born New York City in 1936. Many of his novels are critiques of American media and current culture. His tour de force—the one for which he won the National Book Award—is *White Noise* (1985). *White Noise* is based on the philosophy of Jean Baudrillard. DeLillo's reoccurring thesis is that Americans hide from the reality of death by creating simulated realities through the media, consumerism, and other personal evasions of what really is. According to DeLillo, Americans are awash in data for a reason. The novel is highly satiric, yet menacing.

Running a close second with Thomas Pynchon for privacy is novelist Cormac McCarthy. His fiction could hardly be called playful, unlike some of the other writers in this category. McCarthy's works, on the contrary, are often violent and graphic. Born in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1933, he attended the University of Tennessee but left to begin his writing career. While McCarthy has given at least two interviews (unlike Pynchon), and while there are numerous photographs of him, he prefers a spartan life, one that best puts him in contact with the harsh realities lurking beneath civilized lifestyles. He refuses lucrative speaking engagements and has lived in motels and in a dairy barn. He uses Laundromats and has been known to cut his own hair—even after some financial success. Two of McCarthy's best known works are *Blood Meridian* (1985) and *All the Pretty Horses* (1992). Like Greek tragedy, his works take the reader to the very edge of civilization (mostly the American West, in his case) and into an uncomfortable moral zone that suggests the most primitive dimensions of the human psyche. His style, when the narrator is speaking, can have a difficult Faulkner-like complexity, while his characters often speak in sparse, simple language.

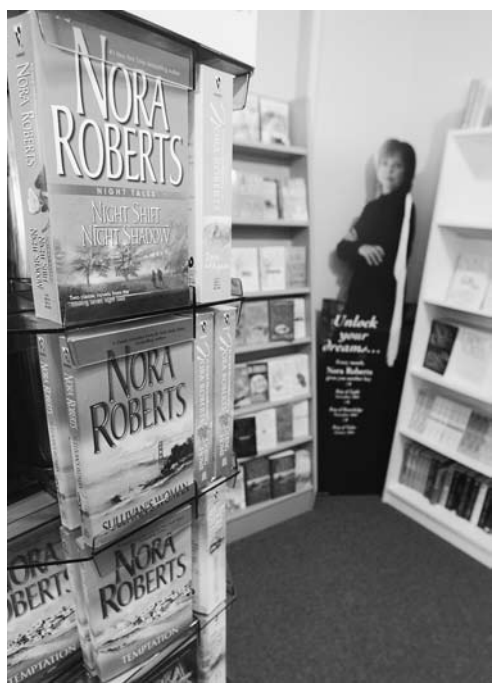
Popular Fiction

There is no set canon for most popular fiction. People have their own favorite authors in each subgenre. The following is a representative sampling of some of the best in each of the major fiction categories: romance, mystery, science fiction, fantasy, and horror.

It is estimated that over one-half of all of the paperbacks sold in the United States are romance novels and that they account for 39.3 percent of all fiction sold in the country. Despite the charges by literary critics that romance novels are formulaic or trite, they are immensely popular, generating over $1.5 billion in sales yearly. They are, simply put, what many readers are reading, and in fact, they are part of a long literary tradition. Some people trace romance novels back to the Renaissance, though most scholars would place the beginnings in the nineteenth century with Jane Austin.

Nora Roberts, one of the most popular of the contemporary romance writers, was born in 1950 in Silver Spring, Maryland. She has a high school education and worked briefly as a legal secretary. As she tells it, she began her writing career in 1979 while trapped at home during a blizzard with two small children and running out of chocolate. Since then, she has been immensely successful.

To date, Roberts has published over 140 romance and mystery novels. (She sometimes publishes the mysteries under the name J. D. Robb.) She has over 127 million copies of her books currently in print. Roberts has won the Rita Award, given by the Romance Writers of America, in various categories



Nora Roberts has written close to 200 novels, remaining one of America's favorite authors. © AP Photo/Chris Gardner.

19 times since 1982. A typical novel of hers, such as the 2004 Rita Award winner *Carolina Moon,* is best described as romantic suspense. Her heroine is vulnerable, searching for answers—answers that put her in mortal danger. In this case *(Carolina Moon),* she is trying to solve the mystery of who murdered her childhood friend, and then, as befitting a romance, she is befriended by a male character with which she develops a romantic relationship. Her novels are generally typified by excellent character development and taut plotting.

There are scores of other successful romance writers and almost as many subgenres, from the naked pirate romances to vampire romances. Two other standout authors are Danielle Steel and Catherine Coulter. Steel, born in 1947 in New York City, has been known to write two and three books a year (she has sold over 530 million copies of her books). Often made into television movies, her books feature a female protagonist whose romance may or may not work out, but who always becomes a stronger, more successful, and better woman by overcoming adversity.

Catherine Coulter was born in Cameron County, Texas, in 1949. Her books frequently appear on the *New York Times* best seller list. Generally, she writes two books a year and is known for having popularized romance trilogies. She has a master's degree in nineteenth-century European history, which helps to explain why she has successfully written many historical romances. Like Nora Roberts, she has also branched into contemporary suspense novels.

While romance is still important in these books (as the genre title indicates), these novels have also brought a belief to several generations of women that strong women are to be admired and that women do not need to accept the dictates of a prudish, Victorian sensibility. Women, as reflected in these books, have come a long way since Hester Prynne, though she certainly pointed the way.

Mystery fiction (which includes the spy novel, crime novel, various forms of the detective novel, and the thriller) is also very popular. This genre began with the American writer Edgar Allan Poe, who, in 1841, introduced Inspector Dupin in his short story "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." This short story, along with "The Purloined Letter," also often appears in contemporary college and high school anthologies. The pattern Poe created of the genius detective with the less than genius sidekick continues to influence many writers, with the best and most popular duo being that created by the English writer Conan Doyle: Sherlock Holmes and Watson. During the 1930s, however, another major strain of detective fiction was created: the hard-boiled detective story (often associated with film noir). Since then, the genre has divided into many subgenres (the procedural novel, the serial killer novel, etc.).

A classic American writer of mystery and detective fiction, one who is still read and studied, and one who often wrote in the noir, hard-boiled style, is Dashiell Hammett. Hammett was born in 1894 in St. Mary's County, Maryland. He died in 1961. His own life was as colorful as one of his characters: a dropout from school at age 13, he went to work helping out his family, joined the army—twice (once for the First World War then, at age 48, for the Second World War), worked for the Pinkerton detective agency, drank a lot, and smoked a lot. Hammett's most famous character is probably Sam Spade, and his most famous novel is probably *The Maltese Falcon* (1930). In Hammett's fictive world, society is corrupt, greedy, and capable of brutality and senseless, shallow grasping after monetary gain. His heroes, like Spade, expose evil and bring moral balance into the world. He has been much imitated. Writers with similar hard-boiled styles who are still read include Raymond Chandler, Mickey Spillane, and Ross MacDonald.

Detroit resident Elmore Leonard is one of the most popular and prolific of America's contemporary mystery novelists. Born in 1925 in New Orleans, Louisiana, he attended the University of Detroit and worked for a while in advertising, all the time moonlighting as a novelist. At first, he wrote westerns; the most popular was *Hombre* (1961), which was made into a movie starring Paul Newman. His first mystery was *The Big Bounce* (1969). Leonard's signature protagonist is someone who is not quite straight, someone who often has a streak of larceny in him (or her). For instance, *Get Shorty,* one of his better known mystery novels, features Chili Palmer, an almost comic gangster who decides to invade Hollywood and make a movie. Leonard himself likes to say that the main attribute of his novels is character, rather than plot, and he enjoys exploring moral pathology. Leonard is also the prototypical writer who immerses himself in the milieu of his novels. To get things authentic, he will do such things as spend days in a courtroom watching arraignments and interviewing cops. He is especially good at capturing the dialogue of thieves and cops and at describing the minutia of their dress. At age 82, he has just published his latest novel, *Up in Honey's Room* (2007).

Walter Mosley, born in Los Angeles, California, in 1952, writes primarily in the hard-boiled school of mystery fiction. The settings of his novels are often the tough post–World War II African American neighborhoods of Los Angeles, teeming with big-city prejudices. In his famous Easy Rawlins series of novels, he also has his own twist on the detective sidekick: Raymond Alexander, nicknamed "Mouse," whose job it is to meet violence with violence. As with Hammett, Mosley's mystery fiction also deals with moral balance, but again, it is with a twist. In Mosley's case, it deals with racial prejudice. His protagonists may have to skirt the law at times—they are forced to do so because of the prejudices around them—but justice, both racial and legal, is

eventually served, and the protagonists are better off. One of Mosley's stated goals is to create black male heroes. He does this within the Easy Rawlins series, the Socrates Fortlow series, and the Fearless Jones series. The important features of a Mosley hero are that he works hard, while demanding and gaining respect—by force, if necessary.

Consistently on the best seller list since 1982, Sue Grafton has created a popular woman detective in Kinsey Millhone, a character who is a former policewoman turned private detective. Grafton was born in 1944 in Louisville, Kentucky. She is best known for her alphabet mysteries, starting with *A Is for Alibi* (1982). While not exactly in the hard-boiled school of American mystery writers, Grafton does follow Hammett in bringing moral order to the world. Her main character, Kinsey Millhone, is eccentric (and a little on the seedy side), smart, caustic, and independent: a role model that clearly knocks the ruffled, silky edges off the woman on a pedestal archetype.

Science fiction, a third popular subgenre, begins in the nineteenth century in England (H. G. Wells) and France (Jules Verne). There was no significant writer of science fiction in the United States until Edgar Rice Burroughs, who wrote his first science fiction in 1912. Then began the age of pulp fiction, with such magazines as *Amazing Stories,* launched by Hugo Gernsback in 1926. Also known as speculative fiction, it extrapolates into the future (occasionally into the past) some scientific idea: robots, computers, space travel, and so on. Sometimes (though rarely in contemporary writers) this extrapolation will lead to a positive fictional world (utopia), but more often, it leads to a dystopia (a world filled with problems). It reflects the American fascination with, as well as suspicions about, science and technology. There are possibly more personal favorites among science fiction readers than there are among romance readers.

One standout is Ursula K. Le Guin, who is also known for her Earth Sea fantasy series. Born in 1921 in Berkeley, California, her mother was a writer, and her father was a distinguished anthropologist. Le Guin's most famous science fiction book is probably *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), in which she extrapolates genetics into the future and explores its consequences. This is a book that begins to look at the feminist idea of androgyny by creating a planet, Gethen, where most of the time, its inhabitants are indeed now androgynous. Le Guin wrote two later essays, the titles of which ask, Is gender necessary? While she herself feels that *The Left Hand of Darkness* did not go far enough, it is still seen as a first of its kind: feminist science fiction.

The extraordinarily prolific Isaac Asimov was born in Petrovichi, Russia. He died in 1992. Asimov attended Columbia University for his undergraduate and graduate schooling and ended with a PhD in biochemistry. Like fantasy writers, he often created fictional worlds that were presented in a series

of books. His two most famous are the Foundation series and his Robot series. The Robot series is famous for delving into the moral quandaries associated with artificial intelligence. Asimov created the famous three laws of robotics to deal with the problem.

This is a good place to discuss a writer who was more than just a science fiction writer and whose work is often required reading in high schools and colleges. Kurt Vonnegut Jr. was born in 1922 in Indianapolis, Indiana, and died in 2007. He studied at Cornell and the University of Chicago, gaining a background in chemistry, biology, and anthropology.

One of his best known science fiction works was *Cat's Cradle* (1963), which tells the story of the potential destructiveness of technology in the form of ice-nine, an invention that can freeze all water on the planet. Even more critically acclaimed was his 1969 book *Slaughterhouse-Five; or, The Children's Crusade*. Vonnegut is often compared to Mark Twain, especially the later Twain, who became pessimistic about humankind, and this comes across in this novel. In this book, a World War II prisoner in Dresden (Vonnegut himself was a prisoner there and witnessed the effects of the fire bombing) is abducted by aliens, who place him in a zoo on their planet and mate him with a movie star. As with most of his works, there is humor, but it is a disturbing, critical, dark humor.

Fantasy literature can be seen as the flip side of the coin from science fiction. While science fiction puts a premium on science and rationality, fantasy focuses in on magic and the irrational. It, of course, has connections to fairy tales and began to become somewhat popular for adults during the nineteenth century, but it really was not until the English writer J.R.R. Tolkien introduced the world to *The Lord of the Rings* in the mid-twentieth century that it really became popular with adult readers. One of the attractions of fantasy is that there is usually a clear demarcation between good and evil. It is consoling to see good triumph over evil, and it is equally comforting to enter a world of wonder and magic.

The Sword of Shannara (1971) was Terry Brooks's first book of fantasy, and it was the first American fantasy novel to make it to the *New York Times* best seller list. Brooks was born in Sterling, Illinois, in 1944. His first series, the Shannara series, has sometimes been criticized for being too close to Tolkien, but since then, he has gone on to create numerous original fantasy worlds. He is a good example of the trend in fantasy writing to create a series of books based in a single secondary world.

Robert Jordan (pen name for James Oliver Rigney Jr.) was born in 1948. His hometown is Charleston, South Carolina. A Vietnam War veteran, he attended the Citadel and graduated with a degree in physics. His most famous series is the Wheel of Time series. There are currently 11 books in

the series, a series that has been written over a 16-year span. Like most fantasy, it is a quest, a journey of discovery of epic proportions. Like all good fantasy writers, Jordan has created an entire mythology, and even a language (as Tolkien did). The series is scheduled to be finished with the next book, but Jordan was recently diagnosed with a rare cancer.

The horror genre is also popular in the contemporary United States. Again, just as with mystery fiction, the American strain of horror and gothic fiction can be traced to Edgar Allan Poe ("The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Tell Tale Heart"). In most cases, what horror fiction suggests is a metaphysical or spiritual side to reality, even when that metaphysical side is of the evil type—this in the midst of an increasingly secular society—and, according to Stephen King, it also works as a catharsis for the darker side of human nature lurking in all of us.

The superstar of contemporary horror is indeed Stephen King. Born in Portland, Maine, in 1947, his first novel, *Carrie* (1974), began a long line of successes, including two outstanding nonhorror novellas, *The Body* and *Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption,* both appearing in 1982. King writes with realistic detail, which helps to intensify the horrors. Vampires, ghosts, and other examples of the supernatural are often part of the story fabric, but so is the exploration of the potential horrors in contemporary society as well as the potential for violence and evil in ordinary people. He is also known for his experimentation with serialization and distribution of books on the Internet. King's *The Green Mile* (1996) is a perfect example. The book was originally written and published in six volumes, ala Charles Dickens. The real horror and evil in the book is the murderous capabilities of William Wharton, a vicious child killer, as well as the realities of capital punishment.

Anne Rice, who was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1941, began her writing career blending horror (vampires and witches) with the sensual and erotic. Her first horror novel was *Interview with a Vampire* (1976). Her unusual take on a traditional tale was to see the story from the vampire's point of view, and, as she herself has pointed out, the vampire becomes a metaphor for her. To read one of her vampire books is to partake of an existential exploration of living in a world where God does not exist and where the vampire must commit evil just to be. Her delving into the philosophy, psychology, and angst of this situation is what draws many people to her novels. Since 2005, with the publication of *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt,* Rice has vowed to approach the metaphysical from a traditional perspective. She plans on writing the biography of Jesus Christ and to never write a vampire book again.

A totally different take from Rice on the Dracula tale is Elizabeth Kostova's *The Historian* (2005). Kostova was born in 1964 in New London, Connecticut. She attended Yale and then received an master's of fine arts from

the University of Michigan. Her first and only book, *The Historian* (2005), took 10 years to write. It has remained on the best seller list and has every sign of becoming a horror classic. Much more in the spirit of the traditional story, it is told from the perspective of the victims, and Vlad Tepes (Dracula) has no redeeming values and no philosophical angst. The story is told in an interesting and effective way, simultaneously on three timelines (sometimes more when there is a story within a story) and primarily through narrative letters.

Popular Nonfiction

It is estimated that nearly 80 percent of the 50,000 or so new books published every year are nonfiction. These are often self-help books, cookbooks, political diatribes, and the like. These are not considered literature; they are more related to journalism and its factual, sometimes ephemeral and time-sensitive nature. Yet there are a number of subgenres of nonfiction that have the potential to be called literature and to endure.

All these important subgenres of nonfiction have been affected by creative nonfiction. While there are still many academic, purely factual and thesis-driven nonfiction works, the works that have the greatest potential to be enduring classics as well as popular with the public merge narrative techniques with fact, history, information, and social commentary. Most affected by the trend of creative nonfiction have been history works, biographies and autobiographies, and travel books.

At times, academic historians are at odds with the first category: popular history. The academics argue, accurately, that they have often already written the same observations, facts, and insights as popular historians have. They have been there and done that, but with little public acclaim. And they claim, often again with justification, that popular historians can be sloppy with their documentation. Generally, though, they write in a different style from popular historians: they debunk and theorize, often in excruciatingly ponderous prose and dry, intellectual analysis. Popular historians, on the other hand, make history come alive by imposing on it a narrative structure and an arresting prose style; thus their works are sometimes called *narrative history.* Simply put, popular historians tell a story, and that is what makes them well-liked and their works candidates for enduring literature.

The dean of contemporary popular historians, David McCullough, is from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He was born in 1933 and is a graduate of Yale University. He began his career writing for magazines—*Time, Life,* and *American Heritage*—and switched to writing popular history books in 1968 with *The Johnstown Flood.* He also writes popular biography. The central research technique in all creative nonfiction is immersion. McCullough is a prime

example. He is a meticulous researcher. His research focuses not just on the facts, but also on the words, thoughts, and ideas of a time period, including its art and culture. He reads what his characters read; he embraces their philosophies, their art, their literature, and their values. He tracks down personal and official letters, not only of the famous, but also of the minor characters in the narrative. He physically traces the steps of his characters making their settings his settings. He puts himself there and, by doing so, puts his readers there as well. Like most of the popular historians, McCullough focuses in on dramatic, pivotal moments, especially those that illuminate the national character. *1776* (2005), for instance, focuses on the crucial year in the American Revolution when it seemed that the Americans had no chance at all. It illuminates the character of George Washington and of the men who served under him. McCullough has won the Pulitzer Prize for two of his biographies, *John Adams* (2002) and *Truman* (1993), as well as the National Book Award for several of his histories.

One of the topics of fascination for American readers of history is the American Civil War. It, too, is a pivotal moment in American identity, with many human dimensions. One of the most popular writers on this subject is Greenville, Mississippi, born Shelby Foote (1916–2005). Foote dropped out of college at the University of North Carolina, joined the army as a captain of artillery, was court-marshaled and dismissed for going out of bounds to visit his girlfriend (later his wife), and then promptly enlisted in the Marine Corps as an infantryman. Foote began as a novelist (thus gaining a good insight into narrative structure) and then spent 20 years writing a three-volume history of the Civil War titled *The Civil War: A Narrative,* finally completed in 1974. He is often remembered as one of the primary narrators of Ken Burns's documentary *The Civil War.*

Another war historian, though certainly more controversial, is Stephen Ambrose. He was born in 1936 in Decatur, Illinois, and died in 2002. He received a PhD from the University of Wisconsin and began his career as an academic historian; in fact, he was the official biographer of Dwight Eisenhower. In the 1990s, Ambrose began writing popular history, focusing especially on World War II, beginning with *Band of Brothers* in 1993. His books soon became best sellers. This frequently made him unpopular with academic historians for not being rigorous enough, and his 2000 book, *The Wild Blue,* brought charges of plagiarism for not putting quotation marks around borrowed material (though he did footnote it).

The autobiography and biography subgenre is peppered with transitory works about, and by, recording artists, actors, sports figures, and people generally in the public eye. Much of it is ghost written and more titillating than significant. Keeping in mind that some of the earlier discussed historians

(McCullough, especially) are also significant biographers, the following are a few of the others who are contemporary and popular.

Mitch Albom and John Grogan are definitely not in the school of rigorous academics, but their books are classified as biography, and they are both often assigned for high school students to read, probably because they are upbeat and have solid life lessons to teach. Mitch Albom was born in 1958 in Passaic, New Jersey, and is well known for his book *Tuesdays with Morrie* (1997), about teacher and sociologist Morrie Schwartz, his former sociology professor at Brandeis University. Though classified as biography, it is not a rigorous study of Schwartz's entire life. It focuses on the last days of his life—14 Tuesdays, to be exact. It is based on the conversations that Albom had with him and on the wisdom, insights, and lessons that Albom recorded. Often criticized by intellectual reviewers, it nevertheless remained on the best seller list for six years. Albom has since written books that could best be described as fantasy literature, but with the same result: immense popularity and often assigned to high school students to read (these include *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* [2005] and *For One More Day* [2006]).

John Grogan has written one of the most unusual—but very popular—of books, *Marley and Me* (2005). But is it an autobiography? Or is it a biography, perhaps? Grogan was born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1957. He attended Central Michigan University and Ohio State and has worked as a journalist and editor. Curiously, Marley is a dog, so while technically, it is the biography of a Labrador retriever, the book is really the autobiography of a family written with great humor.

Another popular historian, Walter Isaacson, was born in 1952 in New Orleans, Louisiana. He is a graduate of Harvard and a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford and has been a journalist, an editor, and the CEO of the Aspen Institute. His latest biography is of an icon of the twentieth century, Albert Einstein, who has had a profound effect on the way we conceive reality. In *Einstein: His Life and Universe* (2007), Isaacson focuses on both *life* and *universe* as his narrative presents the human side of Einstein as well as an attempt at explaining his theories to mere mortals.

Doris Kearns Goodwin, the last of the biographers to be discussed, is also an example of the strengths and weaknesses of creative nonfiction. She was born in 1943 in Brooklyn, New York. She attended Colby College and received her PhD from Harvard. Her books often make the best seller lists—the Pulitzer Prize–winning *No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II* (1995), for example. Like McCullough, she immerses herself in her subject, but like Ambrose, she has been embroiled in a controversy over plagiarism. The general criticism of creative nonfiction is that in a rush to have the next best seller, writers some-

times get sloppy, or they invent. In her case, it seems to have been a case of sloppiness. Her latest book looks at one of the most important of American leaders, Abraham Lincoln, in *Team of Rival: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (2005).

And finally in the biography/autobiography category is Maya Angelou, born in 1928 in St. Louis, Missouri. Born into poverty and a broken family, Angelou is considered by many to be a modern renaissance woman, successfully dabbling in poetry, acting, singing, writing plays, and directing. In addition, she is a historian and an educator. She has lived in many parts of the world and held many jobs. While she never attended college, she has received a number of honorary degrees. But she is probably best known for her series of autobiographies, especially the first one, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969). The latest in the series is *A Song Flung Up to Heaven* (2002), which relates her life up to 1968 and the turbulent years of the Civil Rights Movement.

Travel literature in the United States goes back to Mark Twain and his *Innocents Abroad* (1869), but worldwide, it can be traced back much further. In any case, it is and always has been a natural for creative nonfiction. Good travel literature (unlike guidebooks, which are a kind of journalism and easily dated) has the universality and agelessness of any good literature. The technique of immersion used in travel literature, as in autobiography, is based on personal experience, but it inevitably also includes traditional research. It invites commentary from the writer in many areas: politics, history, economics, sociology, psychology, art, conservation, and so on. Travel literature is also, obviously, about place. At its best, it is a journey through physical, psychological, intellectual, and moral space.

Bill Bryson is one of America's premier travel writers. Born in 1951 in Des Moines, Iowa, Bryson dropped out of college (he would later finish school) to begin a life as a traveler. He began by hiking through Europe, first on his own, then with his friend Stephen Katz (a pseudonym for a reoccurring character in several of Bryson's books). Since then, Bryson's travels have been source material for books on the United States, England, Australia, and Africa. His perennial best seller *A Walk in the Woods* (1998) is a good example of his style. This book takes the reader onto the great Appalachian Trail, which runs from Georgia to Maine. It blends an ironic, often deadpan humor with encyclopedic information and a critical eye for American foibles. Though he is obviously a conservationist, he still takes a realistic view of nature: it is big, sometimes scary, and sometimes just boring.

Tony Horwitz, a Pulitzer Prize–winning reporter, has immersed himself in both travel and history, whether it is in the Civil War South, the Pacific of Captain Cook, or the Middle East. Born in Washington, D.C., in 1958, he

studied history at Brown University and journalism at Columbia. His travel books often blend his own journeys with those of historical figures, as in *Blue Latitudes* (2002). The book has a dual structure: the telling of the journey of Captain James Cook and the telling of Horwitz's own journey as he retraces Cook's explorations, even subjecting himself to sailing on a replica of Cook's ship, the *Endeavor.* The reader not only learns the history and biography, but also gains an understanding of the sociological impact of eighteenth-century exploration.

Paul Theroux is a prime example of the difference between a traveler and a tourist. Both a novelist and travel writer, he was born in 1941 in Medford, Massachusetts. He graduated from the University of Massachusetts and joined the Peace Corps and thus began a life of travel that has led to 12 highly respected travel books. Theroux does not seek out the planned and the well organized. In his opinion, one cannot really know a country or a place by visiting it in the cocoon of the travel agent's agenda; striking out on one's own, perilously if necessary, is a requirement. A traveler must see the place as it really is, not as others want him or her to see it. For example, in his first travel book, *The Great Railway Bazaar* (1975), Theroux travels alone, without outside help, going mostly by train from London to Vietnam and back. Less encyclopedic than some other travel writers, he is instead more novelistic, and he has an eye for the absurd and eccentric. Characters are finely developed, and his descriptions of place have the astute economy of a poet.

Finally, John Berendt takes the technique of immersion to an even more extreme degree than any of the previously mentioned travel writers, with the exception perhaps of Paul Theroux. He has lived for years in the two places he has written about: Savannah, Georgia, and Venice, Italy. Berendt was born in 1939 in Syracuse, New York. He graduated from Harvard and has written for *New York* magazine and *Esquire.* His focus is often on character—especially the upper classes—on artisans, and on the eccentric. He also has a way of making the cities he writes about become characters in themselves. In both of his travel books, *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* (1994) and *City of Falling Angels* (2005), Berendt finds a dramatic moment to wrap his narrative around. In *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil,* it is a murder trial, and in *City of Fallen Angels,* it is the tragic and mysterious burning of the historic La Fenice opera house. In this regard, he is like the popular historian who finds a dramatic, pivotal moment on which to reveal the essence of the city.

Conclusion

Paraphrasing Billy Collins again, to look at the world of contemporary American literature is to look at the history of the nation's heart—and

conscience and mind. Literary works are sometimes critical of the culture (especially when ideals are not met). Americans are even willing to be chastised, especially if it is done with humor, as by Mark Twain, or with powerful emotional resonance, as by Toni Morrison or Harper Lee. American drama and literary fiction are purveyors of the currents of world intellectual thought, though even horror novels can sometimes be philosophical, and romances can sometimes teach about feminist ideals. Americans find solace and beauty in their poets as well as wisdom. Americans celebrate virtues and successes (and sometimes mourn failures) in biographies and histories. Americans dream and learn with the fantasy writers, the travel writers, and the romance writers.

Critics sometimes accuse American popular prose of having a Pollyanna mind-set, but that is only true if being positive is unrealistic. In truth, Americans both embrace and worry about the effects of science, big business, and industrialization, especially in science fiction, and Americans love to bring moral order in mystery fiction because the world can be evil and greedy. The sum total equals a love for the richness of language and the emotional power of a story, even the scary stories of good horror novels.

Note

1. The industry statistics for this chapter come from several sources. The Book Study Industry Group provided many of the raw numbers, especially as they are distilled in Albert N. Greco, "The Economics of Books and Magazines," in *Media Economics: Theory and Practice,* ed. Alison Alexander et al. (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004), 127–48. Some of the information also comes from the U.S. Census Bureau (http://www.census.gov). The statistics for poetry sales were provided by the Poetry Foundation (http://www.poetryfoundation.org). General prose book sales were calculated by the Nielsen BookScan service. Romance book sales were provided by the Romance Writers of America (https://www.rwanational.org). Statistics on nonfiction book sales were provided by Lee Gutkind, *Creative Nonfiction* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1996), 7.

While some of the texts for the slam poets can be found on their Web sites and in books, many of their works have to be experienced through Google's video search engine, either under the poet's name or simply under "slam poetry."

Biographical information comes from author and publisher Web sites and from online interviews.

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7

Media and Cinema

Agnes Hooper Gottlieb

> Today we are beginning to notice that the new media are not just mechanical gimmicks for creating worlds of illusion, but new languages with new and unique powers of expression.
>
> —Marshall McLuhan

America and Its Media

Assessing the status of the media in the United States in the early twenty-first century is a little like predicting the outcome of a bird flu pandemic: anything could happen. Media convergence has become a popular topic at academic conferences, but just how the media will converge and what will capture the interest of the American people is an educated guess. For years, pundits predicted the likes of video telephones and electronic supermarkets, but no one could have imagined the proliferation of the Internet and its corresponding transformation of the ways Americans live, work, and relax.

Personal computers started off in the 1980s as little more than fancy typewriters; the evolution was slow. By the time the century ended, however, the Internet and the World Wide Web had reshaped daily activities, created a new branch of media and consumerism, and profoundly changed American culture. It provided new avenues of entertainment, while at the same time forcing newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and cinema to rethink their markets and audiences. How well the individual media adapt to the new kid on the block will determine just who survives during this second communication revolution (the first being in the fifteenth century, with the invention of moveable type).

Apple's new iPhone hit U.S. shelves in late June 2007. This gadget does it all: With the touch of a button users can access their music, text messages, phone calls, photos, e-mail, and Internet. © AP Photo/Jason DeCrow, file.

ABC News, for example, has created an interactive Web site that encourages viewers to "engage with the news" and to "be seen and be heard" by providing news stories, photos, and videos. Cell phone cameras that can capture news as it occurs allows the *everyperson* to be involved in news gathering and reporting. Video footage of brush fires, floods, and other natural disasters find their way onto the Web site. In 2005, YouTube, a video-sharing technology, premiered and gave aspiring filmmakers an instant massive audience.

While media changes like these occur rapidly and constantly in today's society, the media evolved slowly up until 1900. From that moment on, however, the media have been evolving, morphing, and recreating into new and ever-changing formats. Where newspapers once stood alone, radio, cinema, television, and the Internet have crowded in to demand consumers' time and attention. While the twentieth century was transformational for media, the evolution did not end with the dawn of the year 2000.

Perhaps the hardest thing to get one's arms around with a broad topic like the American media is just what constitutes the media in this new millennium. While it is easy to categorize newspapers, magazines, and old-fashioned television, media convergence means that mainstream media outlets morph into new and different media. The *New York Times* newspaper

still wields incredible authority as a preeminent and elite newspaper, but no one waits to read about breaking news stories like the 9/11 terrorist attacks in a newspaper. A newspaper like the *Times* might help readers put cataclysmic events in context, but it no longer bears the burden of informing readers that an event has taken place. The American people turn on their televisions and, to a lesser extent, go online to learn about breaking news events. In the space of 100 years, the roles and responsibilities of newspapers—initially the only game in town—were transformed by competition that came from many venues.

Newspapers

The last century in the story of newspapers in the United States could be billed as the media version of the Hundred Years' War. Newspapers hunkered down with the advent of radio and fought off competitive threats (both perceived and real), outliving the predictions of doomsayers who regularly forecast the demise of daily newspapers when their dominance was challenged, first by radio, then by television, and finally by the Internet. Newspaper publishers grew fond of quoting Mark Twain's clever quip, "Reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated." By the end of the century, most newspapers were still thriving, though profit margins and readership had shrunk and changed.

Newspapers, slow to take hold in the Americas, had long been the dominant medium in America once they established their presence. There were two printing presses on the Mayflower when it docked at Plymouth Rock in December 1620, but 70 years went by before the first newspaper was attempted. That product, *Publick Occurrences Both Foreign and Domestick,* appeared only once, on September 25, 1690. Publisher Benjamin Harris stated his intention to publish once a month, or more frequently if news events occurred, but the newspaper was banned four days after it appeared by the Massachusetts governor, riled because it had been published without permission.

Publick Occurrences proves an interesting artifact, however, because it demonstrates that what we would define as news today can trace its roots back all the way to the beginning of the American press. The four-page newspaper contained 20 paragraphs of news, mostly domestic, although there were two foreign items. The publication had three pages of news, with the back page left blank so that readers could add their own items as the newspaper was circulated. The stories included information about the kidnapping of two children by Indians, a suicide, a fire in Boston, an epidemic of small pox, and skirmishes between the English and the French and Indians. While little is written in U.S. newspapers today about small pox epidemics, the scourge that

is AIDS continues to take headline space, and while the wars have changed with the decades, the U.S. involvement in Iraq was the leading story in American newspapers in 2007.

After *Publick Occurrences*' short-lived appearance, 14 years passed before another newspaper was undertaken. On April 24, 1704, John Campbell, the postmaster of Boston, edited and published (with permission) the *Boston News-Letter.* Campbell had been sending handwritten letters to the governors of all the New England colonies for at least a year before he had his missives typeset. The journal had no advertisements at first, and Campbell charged two pence a copy (or 12 shillings a year). Campbell gathered together foreign news from four-month-old London newspapers that passed through his post office and added local news. Campbell, a postmaster, not a printer, worked with printer Bartholomew Green, establishing early in American printing history the dual roles of editor and printer. The *Boston News-Letter* continued under various editors for 72 years before folding during the American Revolution.

Founding father Benjamin Franklin looms large in the story of American newspapers. Franklin began as a printer's apprentice to his older brother James, who was printing the *Boston Gazette.* In August 1721, James Franklin began publishing the *New-England Courant* with the backing of a group of investors opposed to the Massachusetts governor. Franklin flaunted his position that he was publishing without permission. The *New-England Courant,* the third newspaper in Boston and the fourth in all the colonies, provided the platform for the Silence Dogood essays that young Ben Franklin penned when he was 16. The *Courant*'s contribution to journalism history is twofold: its publication of essays, letters, and verse expanded the purview of newspapers in the eighteenth century and provided readers with what they liked, not just what they needed to know; and its publication without permission sounded the death knell for that form of prior restraint in the colonies.

Ben Franklin ran away from his domineering brother's influence to Philadelphia, where he became editor and publisher of the *Pennsylvania Gazette.* Franklin's competition in Philadelphia was Andrew Bradford, whose father, William, was one of the pioneer printers in the colonies.

Most memorable from the pre–Revolutionary War period of American history was the ongoing struggle between press and government, the outcome of which established the parameters that helped create a tradition of press freedom that was formalized in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In 1733, John Peter Zenger, a semiliterate German immigrant who printed the *New York Weekly Journal* for a group of backers, clashed with officials in power in New York colony. Zenger, who barely spoke English, was merely the conduit for their antiadministration views, but it was he who bore the brunt of Governor William Cosby's wrath. Cosby hand-picked

a justice and ordered him to obtain an indictment. When the grand jury declined to indict, a group of the governor's council came forward with an action against Zenger, who was arrested in November 1734 and charged with sedition. Zenger was jailed for nine months before his trial (his weekly newspaper continued to be printed by Zenger's wife, Anna). Lawyer James Alexander, one of the newspaper's writers and backers, was disbarred when he challenged the validity of the charges. Zenger's cause was championed by revered Philadelphia attorney Andrew Hamilton, 80 years old at the time. An admission that the printer had actually been responsible for printing such material was in essence an admission of guilt, but Hamilton argued that although Zenger was indeed the printer, he had done nothing wrong because what he had printed was true. Hamilton argued that for a statement to be libelous, it had to be false, malicious, and seditious. Hamilton's eloquent argument carried the day, and Zenger was found not guilty. Although the verdict had no effect on libel law of the day, it was the first case to establish the concept that truth was the best defense of libel, a principle that was finally recognized in the 1790 state constitution of Pennsylvania.

Newspapers played a major role in the American Revolution, first as a propaganda tool that fueled colonists' fervor for war. Foolishly, the British government alienated the press as early as 1765, when it passed the Stamp Act, which required all legal documents, official papers, books, and newspapers to be printed on stamped (or taxed) paper. For newspapers, this would have amounted to about a penny for a standard four-page tome. The act passed in March but was not to be effective until November, which gave angry colonists time to work up opposition to the law. The opposition included the very people who had the wherewithal to fight it: the printers. Newspapers rallied around the charge of taxation without representation leveled against the British Parliament, which was making laws governing the colonies, although the colonies had no voice there.

The summer of 1765 was a hot one in the colonies. Newspapers printed the names of tax collectors, while colonists burned them in effigy during organized protests. Some newspapers flaunted the law by printing without their mastheads so that they were technically no longer newspapers. Some briefly suspended publication. None of the approximately 35 newspapers in the colonies published with the stamp. Reacting to the furor, the Parliament rescinded the Stamp Act in March 1766, but communication was such that the colonies did not learn of the repeal until mid-May.

Patriot Samuel Adams, considered one of the driving forces behind the colonial independence, wrote for the pre-Revolutionary newspapers using about 25 different pen names. And although newspapers had no formal editorial pages, they were important in fueling public opinion against the British.

The success of the Stamp Act protest taught colonists the effectiveness of organized protest. Adams realized that to lure the masses to his cause, he needed to present the colonists with reasoned arguments against the British. And since the men who would be the foot soldiers for the cause were not highly literate, the campaign had to be waged in simple terms. Thus began what some historians have called America's first organized public relations campaign, masterminded by Adams and his compatriots. When British troops fired into a mob of protestors in Boston in 1770, Adams labeled it a massacre in print. When the British government taxed tea, Adams led a group of colonists in a staged media event to dump tea in Boston Harbor.

If Adams can be considered the public relations man of the Revolution, Thomas Paine is its poet. Paine's 1776 essay *Common Sense* is credited with speaking plain language that could be understood by the common (and often uneducated) patriot. It laid out a clear argument for a break with Britain and argued in favor of independence.

After the Revolution, newspapers served as the sounding boards for the two major political platforms, the Federalists and the Republicans. The press of the period was a partisan one, with major newspapers arguing about the ratification of the U.S. Constitution and the legality of the Alien and Sedition Act and reporting the sordid and sensational rivalry between two of America's Founding Fathers. *The Federalist Papers,* a series of essays published in newspapers and pamphlet form, set out a methodical argument in favor of passage of the U.S. Constitution. Written in part by James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and others, the essays argued point by point in favor of the Constitution. They also set out an argument for press freedom, a principle that was solidified in a few words as part of the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights.

Hamilton, first publisher of the *New York Post* (1801), was considered the leader of the Federalists, while Thomas Jefferson, champion of the common man, was his counterpart among the Republicans. Hamilton, who served as George Washington's secretary of the treasury, met his fate in a now legendary duel with Aaron Burr in 1804.

By 1800, journalism was thriving in the young United States. Philadelphia had six daily newspapers, New York had five, and Boston, which had been the birthplace of American journalism and the hotbed of the American Revolution, had none. Journalism continued to grow in the early decades of the 1800s and expanded into new regions as the United States outgrew its borders. The cost of a daily newspaper, however, was out of reach for most of America, filled as it was with rural farmers and modest merchants. Newspapers cost about six cents (about the same price as a pint of whisky).

Slow and tedious handpresses that physically limited the circulation of newspapers gave way in 1830 to the first steam press, which overnight tripled

the speed of printing. Production capabilities grew at the same time as the reading public swelled. Thus began one of the golden ages of American journalism, the penny press, beginning in 1833 with the four-page *New York Sun.* The *Sun,* founded by Benjamin Day, introduced a breezy reporting style that appealed to a new class of readers. With little emphasis on politics, the penny press moved away from partisan reporting and focused instead on local news, entertaining information. Sensationalism, still with us today, reared its ugly head.

The shift to cheap newspapers made them accessible to America's uneducated or poorly educated workers, but a newspaper that appealed to workers was fundamentally different from one that appealed to America's upper crust. Human interest news and local stories became more important; news shifted away from partisan politics and changed the definition of what news was. At the same time, penny papers were accused of overemphasizing crime and sex and pandering to bad taste, a recurring theme in American culture.

While the papers actually sold for a penny for only a short time, the drastic reduction in price and the shift in readership signaled a societal change that never turned back. With the help of the fruits of the Industrial Revolution, which enabled and enhanced the printing of many newspapers, journalism became mass communication for the first time.

Leaders in the penny press era of journalism included James Gordon Bennett Sr., who founded the *New York Herald,* and Horace Greeley, publisher of the rival *New York Tribune.* New York became the center of publishing in the United States, and its newspapers flourished throughout the nineteenth century.

Technology and technique were two majors themes for newspapers during the nineteenth century. Technology furthered the way newspapers were printed, opening the possibility of mass circulation. The telegraph, invented by Samuel Morse in 1840, transformed how information was gathered, allowing timeliness to creep into the equation of what made a newspaper stand out. Modern modes of transportation extended circulation areas and fueled the desire to get the news to the public first.

While news of the battle of Lexington and Concord that started the Revolutionary War took six weeks to make its way from Boston to a Savannah newspaper in 1775, the telegraph allowed daily reports of the Civil War to appear in modern New York newspapers. The telegraph is also credited with triggering the use of reporters' bylines, which began to appear in the 1860s under the tagline "by telegraph."

The telegraph also has been credited with changing how journalists reported their stories. American journalism initially adhered more closely to the rules of fiction, featuring a beginning, a middle, and an end. When Aaron

Burr and Alexander Hamilton faced off in a duel, for example, the *New York Morning Chronicle* described how the two men arrived at the scene, how they counted out 10 paces and loaded their pistols. In the story's last paragraph, the author wrote, "The fire of Colonel Burr took effect, and General Hamilton almost instantly fell."[1] The development of the telegraph, however, coupled with the unreliability and high cost of the new technology spurred the development of what is known today as the inverted pyramid style of writing. The reporter's first paragraph, called a lead, focuses, instead of setting the scene, on explaining the most important thing that happened. The reporter is charged with answering the five *W*s and *H*: who, what, when, where, why, and how.

Correspondents during the Civil War were uncertain that their transmission would go through in its entirety, so it became imperative to put the most important information first. In addition, these correspondents in the field had to find a telegraph office and pay for the transmission themselves. A poorly paid group in the first place, that financial burden in itself was enough reason to keep the transmissions terse.

Photography also came of age during the Civil War, although the newspaper technology lagged. While it was still too difficult to reproduce photographs in a daily newspaper, the Civil War was notably the first American war to be recorded in photographs. Mathew Brady and about 20 of his photographers trekked the war's battlefields and created a record of about 3,500 pictures that survive in the National Archives. Since photography was unavailable to newspapers and periodicals, war artists proliferated. In theory, the artists' renderings of battles could provide insight into the military techniques of the day, but in practice, not all artists thought it necessary to witness the battles. Some of the drawings that were published were based on what the artist, safely ensconced in a newsroom far from the action, thought the battle might have looked like.

Other common journalistic techniques emerged at mid-century. Horace Greeley's interview of Brigham Young, published in the *New York Tribune* in 1859, was highly criticized at the time because, the critics claimed, it was contrived to make news. It signaled the beginning of journalistic interviews designed to illuminate the private details of a celebrity's life. Greeley, a moralistic and opinionated publisher, interviewed Young, leader of the Mormon church and husband to 15 wives, in Utah and printed the verbatim interview in his *Tribune.* The description of polygamy prompted a national debate that ended in its prohibition by Congress three years later.

The explosion in technology also transformed the speed in which readers received information. James Gordon Bennett, of the *New York Herald,* then the largest paper in the United States, kept a fleet of small boats cruising off

the coast of New Jersey to intercept incoming steamers from Europe to get the news from that continent to its readers first. Carrier pigeons also were used by enterprising editors to send stories back to the newsroom swiftly. The expansion of the railroad westward, the ever-increasing miles of rails and telegraph wires, played their part in the explosion of mass communication in the United States.

Later in the century, the glow of gas lamps and, later, electric light increased the usefulness of the newspaper by expanding the reading day. This innovation, coupled with technology that allowed for swift gathering and printing of news, ushered in the heyday of the afternoon newspaper. Selling itself as the most up-to-date information available, the afternoon newspaper appealed to commuters returning from their jobs in the city and to women who were able to find the time to read after they had completed their daily chores. The evening papers included closing stock prices, the day's sports scores, news of the day, and the department store advertising aimed at women readers. By the 1870s, journalism in America's cities featured morning papers and, in many cases, independent afternoon newspapers, owned by the same company, but with different staffs and content. There were 16 daily English-language newspapers published in New York in 1892; 7 of those appeared in the evening. Sunday newspapers also rose in popularity at this time, fueled by the reading public's desire for the news seven days a week and by a U.S. population that was increasingly educated and literate.

The 1890s in New York journalism was punctuated by the legendary rivalry between two of the major personalities of American newspaper history: Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst. Pulitzer, generally cast in the role of hero of this story, was an unlikely leading man—a Hungarian immigrant whose eyesight was so bad that he was rejected by the Austrian Army and the French Foreign Legion before he was deemed fit enough for the Union Army during the Civil War. He began his journalistic career after the Civil War as a reporter for a German-language daily in St. Louis. Pulitzer bought the *St. Louis Dispatch* for a song at a sheriff's sale in 1878, merged it with the *St. Louis Post,* and established his *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* as a profitable and most important evening paper in that city. Pulitzer stormed into New York four years later with his purchase of the *New York World* and used that newspaper as the flagship for his new journalism style. Readers flocked to his newspaper, and later to his *New York Evening World.* His new style affected newspapers around the country. Pulitzer was an incorrigible self-promoter. He backed crusades against crooked politicians, championed the little guy, and exposed companies and contractors who stole and lied to the poor. His so-called stunt journalism triggered a national phenomenon. The most notorious of the stunt girls, journalism's Nellie Bly, was his employee

when she made the news as well as reported it by going around the world in fewer than 80 days.

While Pulitzer had a natural nose for news and loved the kind of stories that caught readers' attention, he also loved responsible journalism. He tempered his sensationalistic approach to news with an editorial page that was thoughtful and insightful. He saw the editorial page as the heart of his newspaper and the main reason for the paper to publish.[2]

If Pulitzer is the hero of this epoch, Hearst is the villain. Generally considered to be the founder of so-called yellow journalism, Hearst went head-to-head with Pulitzer in a circulation war that pitted the *New York Journal* against Pulitzer's newspapers. Hearst, who was tossed out of Harvard for playing a practical joke, learned the newspaper business in San Francisco after his father bought the *San Francisco Examiner* and handed over its management to his young son. Hearst arrived in New York and bought the *Morning Journal* in 1895 and almost immediately declared war on Pulitzer's papers, which were topping New York's circulation. He stole away Pulitzer's best and seasoned writers and editors and built a following on sex and crime stories that appealed to readers' prurient interests. He also played fast and loose with the facts. He relied on screaming headlines set in extra-large type. The term *yellow journalism* came to describe this popular style of writing after Hearst stole away Pulitzer's artist, who drew the "Yellow Kid" for his comic section. The comic featured a street urchin dressed in a long, flowing, yellow coat. When the artist, Richard Outcault, moved to the *Journal* and began penning the comic for that newspaper, Pulitzer hired another artist and continued the comic. Pundits began referring to the "Yellow Press," and the moniker stuck. Today, the term *yellow journalism* is still used to represent the most base of newspaper and television reporting.

Muckraking, mostly a phenomenon in U.S. magazines, rose to prominence in the new century, perhaps in direct response to the growing perception of an irresponsible press that flourished because of yellow journalism. The term *muckraking* was meant as an insult to news reporters when it was coined by President Theodore Roosevelt, who compared the investigative reporters of the day to the man who rakes the muck in the then popular allegory *Pilgrim's Progress.* Journalists, however, embraced the term and continued their campaigns against political, social, and business corruption in earnest.

The Twentieth Century: Multimedia Emerge

Newspapers in the twentieth century fended off challenges to their supremacy from radio and newsreels before succumbing, at least in part, to the power of television in the 1960s. After the Great War, American life shifted radically.

People were anxious to forget the troubles of war. It was the day of the flappers, women who were embracing their newfound right to vote, while at the same time shedding the bondage of their clothing for knee-length dresses and pushing the boundaries of societal restrictions. Today, we call the era the Roaring Twenties, while the newspapers of the time represent jazz journalism. Newspapers responded to the looser times by a preoccupation with sex, crime, and entertainment and the rise of tabloid newspapers. Tabloids initially referred to the small size of the newspaper, making it cheaper to publish and easier to read for commuters on trains and subways, but tabloid journalism came to mean the kind of sensational journalism that includes screaming headlines, lots of photos, and appeals to the working class. Sports reporting increased; Hollywood stars became celebrities in the press. In New York, the birthplace of American tabloid journalism, the *New York Daily News* and the *New York Post* typified the tabloid brand of journalism even into the twenty-first century.

Newspapers were frightened by the power of the nascent radio industry. Although radio did not initially compete with newspapers to report the news, it was clear from the beginning that it could threaten newspapers' monopoly on information. In January 1922, there were 30 radio stations broadcasting in the United States; 14 months later, there were 556. Newspapers were reporting on the phenomenon of radio in their columns. The listening audience grew quickly—there were about 50,000 radio sets in 1921 and more than 600,000 in 1922. By 1930, that number had risen to 14 million.[3]

Newspapers were not challenged by radio broadcasts per se. In fact, many newspaper publishers dabbled in radio by purchasing stations or sponsoring programs. Yet the newspaper industry was, indeed, frightened by the possibility that it would lose advertising dollars to the new industry and by the fear that radio stations would begin reporting news. Even though the American Newspaper Publishers Association's radio committee sagely took the official position that news on the radio stimulated newspaper sales, owners were not convinced.

One way to curtail the growth of radio as a vehicle for news was to attempt to ban it. The Associated Press (AP), founded in 1848 as an organization that shared news and the expenses incurred covering world events, initially tried to prevent radio stations from using their news copy to broadcast radio newscasts. It fined the *Portland Oregonian* $100 for broadcasting the results of the 1924 presidential voting. Four years later, the AP, United Press International (UPI), and the International News Service had caved in and supplied the results to the radio stations. The candidates themselves had purchased radio air time to get their messages across.

At first, radio broadcasts complemented newspaper coverage: the 1924 political conventions, the 1925 Scopes Monkey trial in Tennessee, the arrival

of Charles Lindbergh in Washington after his flight to Paris in 1927. Sports events found a natural venue in radio. The 1927 Jack Dempsey–Gene Tunney prizefight was carried on 69 stations. One of the major concerns for newspaper publishers, however, was that the press associations were actually giving information to the radio stations before the newspapers had actually published the information. They were fighting a losing battle. Bowing to pressure from their newspaper clients, the wire services agreed to stop selling their news items to radio stations. Radio responded by gathering the information itself. Finally, the newspaper-radio war of the 1930s ended with UPI creating a news report specifically for radio broadcast. The AP fell into line shortly thereafter.

While news moguls were debating what role radio would play in the gathering and dissemination of news, there was no dispute over the new medium as a vehicle for entertainment. America's love of popular music became apparent. Dance music and band leaders found a home on the radio. Just as sports figures like Babe Ruth and Jack Dempsey became celebrities in part because of their national exposure through radio, singing stars like Bing Crosby and Al Jolsen made a name for themselves over the airwaves. Radio also appeared to be a natural venue for dramas, situational comedies, and variety shows. The most enduring drama genre, the soap opera, traced its beginning to radio. The genre was so named because the syrupy romantic dramas with ongoing plotlines that brought fans back to listen day after day were sponsored by soap companies, most notably Proctor & Gamble. The first soap opera was *Guiding Light,* which came on the air in 1937, made the transition to television in 1952, and was still broadcasting 70 years later.

It is hard to separate the history of radio from the stories of the other media with which it competed. It has basically weathered four distinct periods: 1890 to the 1920s, in which radio was developing into a distinct medium; the 1930s to the 1940s, the golden age of radio programming; the 1950s to the 1960s, the television age, in which radio needed to adapt its programming to accommodate the new medium; and the posttelevision age, which continues today.[4] Radio includes a wide range of programming choices, including call-in shows, sports radio, shock radio, advice, interview, all-news, and commentary, in addition to the traditional music stations.

Radio, however, enjoyed a short-lived period as the entertainment medium of choice. While it has continued into the twenty-first century as a medium of news, entertainment, sports, and talk, its influence is minimal. Americans gathered around their radio sets in the 1940s to listen to broadcasts from World War II, calming words from President Roosevelt, and the music, comedy, and dramas that had come into fashion. That cozy tableau with a radio in the center did not last.

While the destruction of newspapers by the new medium of radio never materialized, the second battle focused on how people chose to spend their time. The movie industry, which began in earnest in the 1920s, captured people's attention, and their expendable incomes. When television arrived on the scene in the late 1940s, radio was pushed aside quickly. People moved their chairs from in front of the radio and settled down to watch an evening of television. Radio has continued as a secondary medium. People tend to listen to radio while they are doing something else—most notably, driving.

Television had the potential to snuff out radio and newspapers on all fronts: it could consume Americans' time in the evening, time previously spent reading newspapers or listening to radio; it could take a serious chunk out of limited advertising revenues; and it could be the medium of choice for viewers hungry for the day's news. The shift did not happen overnight. It soon became abundantly clear that newspapers could not compete on timeliness or immediacy with television news. Americans—indeed, the world's citizens—turned to their televisions on November 22, 1963, when President John F. Kennedy was gunned down in a motorcade in Dallas, Texas. While some afternoon newspapers published special editions to update their readers on the nation's tragedy, the published information was outdated before the ink was dry. Three days later, the man suspected of being the trigger man, Lee Harvey Oswald, was shot on live national television.

For newspapers, television's ascendancy should have raised a red flag and forced publishers and journalists to rethink what they did and how they did it, but newspapers continued to carry on business as usual, despite other warning signals. Newspapers had spent too many centuries as the only game in town and were slow to react to change. They still are.

As the decade of the 1960s unfolded, television demonstrated its power as a news medium during the Vietnam War, when America's confidence in its government was shaken. Anger at U.S. policies in Vietnam was fueled by press coverage, especially the television video from Southeast Asia. It was the first time Americans' witnessed the horror of war on film. They did not like what they saw. Americans began questioning their government and their leaders in earnest. When U.S. president Richard Nixon ordered the invasion of Cambodia in 1970, college campuses erupted in violence. One-third of the universities in the United Sates were shut down that spring in the wake of student walkouts, protests, and sit-ins. Four students at Kent State were killed when the National Guard in Ohio fired their rifles into the protesting crowd.

America was in crisis. Then, during the presidential campaign of 1972, the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate Hotel were burglarized. Two local reporters for the *Washington Post,* Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, began investigating and reporting about the burglary

and its aftermath. Ultimately, their reporting revealed a conspiracy to cover up the involvement of highly placed Republicans and a campaign of "dirty tricks" designed to make the Democrats look bad. The trail of responsibility led directly to the White House, and on August 8, 1974, Nixon resigned the presidency. As a result of its coverage of the Watergate affair, as it came to be known, the *Washington Post* newspaper won journalism's top award, the Pulitzer Prize.

Societal developments also had an effect on newspapers and their readership. The last half of the twentieth century saw a shift in the types of writing by journalists. A second wave of new journalism was evidenced beginning in the 1960s with writers who took a fiction approach to nonfiction, book-length topics. Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood,* serialized in *The New Yorker* in 1965 and published in book form later that year, told the story of the senseless murder of a family in Kansas. Writers like Norman Mailer, Tom Wolfe, Jimmy Breslin, David Halberstam, and Gay Talese were known for this novel approach to news. A genre of book publishing, true crime, emerged from this new journalism. These edgy books complemented well the tastes of the American public, who were becoming enamored with being entertained by television.

Another book genre, the kiss-and-tell phenomenon, also emerged. Most notably, the 1977 publication of *Mommy, Dearest,* by Christina Crawford, laid out in gruesome detail the maternal mess that was her mother, the famous and glamorous movie star Joan Crawford. It opened the floodgates. Tell-all books became popular. Magazines that made public the private lives of movie stars and celebrities proliferated. *People Weekly,* one of the profitable national magazines owned by Time Inc., and its imitators gave rise to television programs like *Entertainment Tonight, Extra!,* and *The Insider.* The lines between news and entertainment blurred. Is extensive reporting of stories like the death of celebrity Anna Nicole Smith and the ensuing paternity battle over her baby daughter journalism? When Fox News interviews the contestants as they are voted off the ultrapopular *American Idol* song contest, is it news or blatant self-promotion?

During the twentieth century, the United States also saw the professionalization of the news reporter. Early in the century, uneducated news hacks often rose from positions as copy boys into full-fledged reporters. Ultimately, however, the route into journalism came from college, with hundreds of journalism programs springing up at universities around the country. Journalists also became specialists in their beats, beginning about 1960. Urban reporters, consumer writers, and science writers joined the ranks of other established beats: war correspondents, political writers, foreign correspondents, and feature writers. During the 1970s, the environment also became an established area for journalists.

Not only did the type of journalism change, but the profession was profoundly affected by technological advances throughout the century. While reporters initially pounded out their stories on manual typewriters, they ultimately ended the century by carrying portable laptop computers with them on assignments. Conversations could be recorded, first on large, unwieldy machines, but in the 1980s, portable minirecorders made that job simpler. In the 1990s, cell phones provided added flexibility, while e-mail became a tool for interviewing. The subjects of interviews found comfort in their ability to write down the words that could be used as quotes, while reporters were able to cast a wider net in researching a story. The Internet also made journalistic research quick and efficient. What could have taken hours just 10 years earlier could be had in an instant. Tracking down a court opinion, for example, could have required a journalist to travel miles to a courthouse and cost hundreds of dollars in photocopying. With the Internet, it could be located and printed in minutes.

The wire services also changed. The incessant noise of newsrooms at midcentury was caused by the *clang-clang* of the wire service teletypes, which became obsolete with the shift to computer technology. That was not the only difference. The fierce rivalry exhibited between the nonprofit cooperative, the AP, and its for-profit counterpart, UPI, slowly faded. Once considered vital for a large newspaper to subscribe to both of the big wire services, that expense became a luxury as costs accelerated with the years. The AP more often became the wire service of choice, while newspapers supplemented their output with one of the specialized wires, like the Dow Jones, the Gannett wire, or the New York Times News Service. UPI changed hands repeatedly but clung to life by trimming its employees and limiting its offerings. As UPI faded, the British wire service, Reuters, rose in prominence in the United States, with its focus on business and international news.

The decline of the cities and the rise of suburbia took their toll on newspapers. In 1940, there were 181 cities that had competing daily newspapers. That number shrank to 30 by 1981. New York City, once a mecca for newspapers, whittled down to three regular dailies: the *New York Times,* the *New York Post,* and the *New York Daily News.* The *Wall Street Journal* also published five days a week. Those four papers numbered among the top 11 papers in the country in 2006.

Meanwhile, suburban newspapers grew in number and influence. *Newsday,* which covers the mostly suburban Long Island, New York, was founded in 1940 and tapped into the growing number of bedroom communities that sprang up in commuting distance to New York City. *Newsday* is the 19th largest newspaper in the United States, with a circulation in 2006 of 488,825, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulation.[5]

USA Today, founded by the Gannett newspaper chain in 1982, provided the nation with its first truly national newspaper. With 2.5 million circulation, *USA Today* publishes five days a week and looks the same no matter where it is purchased (by contrast, the national edition of the *New York Times* is a truncated version of the edition that circulates in the New York metropolitan area). Although the U.S. journalism community initially reacted to *USA Today* as if it were a bad joke, the newspaper ultimately made an indelible mark on all U.S. newspapers. Its use of color, its reliance on graphics, its streamlined layout, and its abridged approach to news led journalists to dub *USA Today* "McPaper," flippantly calling it the fast food of newspapers. Yet all American newspapers, even the "Gray Old Lady" (the nickname for the *New York Times*), have been affected by its innovations.

Journalism Outside the Mainstream

Journalism has long been a tool in the United States for people who lack a voice. While the costs of a mainstream newspaper initially stood in the hundreds of thousands, daily newspapers today trade hands for hundreds of millions of dollars. That prohibitive cost has always stood in the way of making newspapers the voice of the little guy, but grassroots movements have long recognized the power of modest methods in mass communication.

In the nineteenth century, the abolitionist cause and the suffrage battle were waged in the press. Although mainstream newspapers ignored—or worse still, mocked—these social justice crusades, the proponents found an outlet for their arguments by creating their own newspapers. Abolitionist newspapers appeared early in the century. The *Philanthropist* was published in Ohio beginning in 1817; the *Manumission Intelligencer* had its home in 1819 in Jonesboro, Tennessee. The *Genius of Universal Emancipation,* the most influential of these early journals, was published by Benjamin Lundy beginning in 1821. Lundy hired William Lloyd Garrison to work on the *Genius.* Lundy traveled the country drumming up readers and supporters to the cause, while Garrison published the paper. Garrison and Lundy had philosophical differences that ultimately led to a split and the publication of a new journal, Garrison's the *Liberator.* Garrison spewed fire. His strong language against slavery and the people who traded in it had tremendous shock value. He published for 30 years. His last issue, on January 1, 1866, celebrated the ratification of the constitutional amendment to abolish slavery.

The black press was also born during the nineteenth century. It marked its founding with the publication of *Freedom's Journal* in 1827. By the time the Civil War began, about 40 black newspapers had been founded. Black newspapers, however, were poorly funded and slow to take hold, most certainly

because of the lack of education available to the nation's black Americans and the high illiteracy rates among slaves and free blacks. While abolition clearly was an important topic in the black newspapers, they also were concerned with the lives of black Americans and provided news and information about this completely marginalized and disenfranchised group. Black editors and publishers numbered in the dozens, but most famous of all was former slave Frederick Douglass. Douglass escaped from slavery in 1838 and traveled widely throughout Europe, speaking on the horrors of the practice. When he returned to the United States, Douglass began his own publication, *The North Star,* in 1847.

Many of America's suffragists began their activism in the abolitionist movement, where they often were treated like second-class citizens. Publications like Amelia Bloomers's the *Lily* and Paulina Wright Davis's the *Una* gave women's rights the soft sell. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony would have none of that when they published the *Revolution* beginning in 1868. A few years later, the *Woman's Journal* began a 47-year tenure as the voice of the woman's movement in America. It was merged with several other like publications in 1917, just three years before the 19th Amendment to the Constitution gave women the right to vote in 1920.

One major characteristic of the abolition and suffrage publications was that they suffered from a perpetual lack of funds. They were not alone. Any grassroots publication that relied mostly on the beneficence of its readers, rather than the income of advertisers, could anticipate difficulty in meeting a payroll and financing the costs of printing.

In the 1930s, for example, Dorothy Day founded the *Catholic Worker* to spread the word of the Roman Catholic social justice movement. Day began her journalism career on the *New York Call,* a socialist newspaper, and the *Masses.* She began publishing the *Catholic Worker* in 1933 with Peter Maurin. Published in the kitchen of a New York tenement, the *Catholic Worker* appealed to many of the Great Depression's unemployed with its message of a benevolent, caring Church. Day had to sell her typewriter to get a second edition of the monthly paper published. While the circulation of Day's newspaper has always been modest, its success has always been in publicizing the goals of the movement.

Day was not alone. I. F. Stone, one of the earliest of the twentieth century's alternative journalists, was a staunch opponent of Senator Joseph McCarthy's Communism witch hunt in the 1950s, when he began his newsletter dedicated to liberal ideals, *I. F. Stone's Weekly,* in 1953. Stone's newsletter lasted until 1971.

Stone and Day are among a handful of writers who are credited with paving the way for the underground press that began in the 1960s. These cheaply

printed newspapers were the forerunners to the now-popular newsletters that were made possible by personal computers in the 1990s. Underground newspapers were not confined by the dictates of fair play and objectivity that often constrained mainstream newspapers. The publishers of these radical newspapers did not worry about polite language and did not care if they made enemies of the rich and powerful. At a time when the nation was in turmoil, when college campuses were hotbeds of unrest, when the civil rights movement was simmering and the Vietnam War was triggering ugly protests, the underground press fueled the fires. The *Village Voice* seems a mainstream paper to many today, but it was considered the most powerful voice of the underground when it began publishing in 1955. *Rolling Stone,* which first appeared in 1967, became a hugely successful commentator on popular music and society. Other papers came and went. Some published on college campuses, others at high schools.

Today, the Internet has supplanted traditional newspapers or cheap newsletters in giving a voice to the silent. The zine, a Web magazine, was popular for a period before blogs, short for *weblogs,* took over. Literally millions of blogs are published on the Internet, giving voice to people who want to share their thoughts, their actions, their private lives, and their public opinions with an anonymous world. Like the underground newspapers of the 1960s, which abandoned the rules and customs of newspapers, the veracity and reliability of a blog is not guaranteed. Often the ravings of the passionate and irate, blogs have evolved from online diaries into a no-rules free-for-all.

Television

Television was introduced to the American public in 1939 at the New York World's Fair. There were a few hundred television sets in the United States by then, and about 40 million radio sets, when Franklin D. Roosevelt was televised at the opening ceremonies for the fair. World War II slowed down the steamroller that television ultimately became, and FDR confined his cozy fireside chats to radio, but the entertainment value of television slowly emerged during the 1940s. By October 1950, there were 8 million sets in America's homes. There was no turning back.

While Johannes Gutenberg gets credit for the sixteenth-century invention of the printing press, and radio points to Guglielmo Marconi as its inventor, television can single out no one person. The technology necessary to translate both sound and picture through the air waves and into people's homes took many minds. A few of the innovators, however, stand out. In 1929, Russian Vladimir Zworykin was working for Westinghouse in Pittsburgh when he invented the cathode-ray tube, which made the television picture possible.

Meanwhile, American engineer Philo Farnsworth lays claim to producing the first rudimentary television broadcast in 1927. While the engineers spent decades perfecting the science behind the technology, a true visionary in creating television as the ultimate mass medium in the twentieth century was David Sarnoff.

Sarnoff honed his communication skills in radio. He understood that if radio was to be a mass medium, it had to be simple to use. His streamlined vision of a little box appealed to American consumers. It worked. Then, Sarnoff diversified his company, RCA, into television. Determined to do for television what he did for radio, Sarnoff had the first television studio built in the Empire State Building in 1932. The 1930s proved to be a decade of mere preparation for the medium that was to come. Broadcasts occurred but were limited, of poor quality, and unavailable to all except the select few who had TV sets.

It was not until 1941 that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which had been established to sort out the radio air waves, approved commercial broadcasting for 18 television stations. They were approved to offer 15 hours of programming each week. The federal government froze development of more stations during World War II, and at war's end in 1945, only six stations were still on the air.

Television as a powerful mass medium truly was born in the 1950s. It was then that the three networks, the National Broadcasting Company (NBC), the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), and the American Broadcasting Company (CBS), solidified their positions. The networks traced their roots to radio—NBC was first in 1928, when it established a coast-to-coast network of 58 stations. CBS appeared on the scene in 1929. ABC was the latecomer; it was formed in 1945, when NBC was forced to sell part of its network by the FCC. The big three ruled television programming for decades and were joined in 1987 by Fox Broadcasting. Later, UPN and the WB (Warner Brothers) debuted in 1995 by focusing on programming to lure young audiences and African American viewers to their offerings. UPN and the WB, which often competed for the same audience, transformed into one unit, the CW network, in September 2006.

Cable television, which actually had been operating since 1948, made it possible for remote areas to receive television programming. However, the biggest boon to cable came with the advent of pay television, for which viewers pay a premium for extra television stations. Home Box Office (HBO) debuted in 1972 and featured newly released movies that had never been seen on television. It ultimately expanded its programming to include exclusive concerts, performances, sporting events, and its own comedies and dramas, most especially the long-running Mafia drama *The Sopranos.* The

1980s was a golden age for cable. The Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN) debuted in September 1979, while the Cable News Network (CNN) was founded in 1980. Despite skeptics who predicted that an all-news or all-sports channel could never survive, those two channels thrived. As programming on cable accelerated, more and more households made the conversion. The Cabletelevision Advertising Bureau asserted that nearly 93 million households (85%) in the United States used cable television in 2005.

The rules for cable television were different. While standard television programming adhered to specific rules and limits that were monitored by the FCC, cable television flourished without them. Comedians on network television had to watch their language and punch lines, but cable television provided a venue for adult situations, nudity, and risqué topics. Parents who objected to racy content had two choices: not buying cable at all or programming their televisions to black out objectionable shows.

Cable also served as the great media equalizer. Television was an expensive technology far beyond the means of the common person. Its initial capability was limited to a small number of channels. Cable's wide breadth of channels provided the possibility of access to a wider spectrum. Local access channels opened broadcasting to groups and communities without extensive resources and allowed television to provide news coverage that normally was reserved for small weekly newspapers.

In addition to cable viewing, how Americans watched television was profoundly affected by the mass marketing of the video cassette recorder (VCR) beginning in the late 1970s. Two different systems, the VHS and the Betamax, competed in the United States initially, but VHS ultimately dominated. The advent of the VCR affected television viewing in three major ways: first, it opened up a rental market that allowed viewers to borrow movies and watch them at home; second, it allowed viewers to record their favorite shows and watch them at their leisure—gone were the days when viewers had to stay home and watch their favorite shows at an appointed time; third, it allowed viewers to fast-forward past unwanted commercial advertisements. The VCR technology was slowly replaced by digital video disks (DVDs), which resemble music CDs and computer disks but allow television programs and movies to be replayed on televisions. DVDs were first marketed in the mid-1990s but slowly replaced VCRs as the state-of-the-art recording method.

The latest television technologies to capture the pocketbooks of the American people were flat screen TVs and high-definition TVs (HDTVs). Flat screen televisions allowed consumers to hang their sets like a picture on the wall, while HDTV provided an incredibly sharp, seemingly three-dimensional picture. Often, the two technologies were marketed together.

Television programming in the United States initially borrowed from radio. Comedies and dramas that had captured America's attention on radio segued into live television. The popular radio personalities like George Burns and Gracie Allen broadcast initially in both television and radio, but television clearly was more suitable to the situation comedies and soap operas that had been popularized on radio in the 1930s and 1940s. Ultimately, radio abandoned its pursuit of these broadcasts and concentrated instead on the news, talk, music, and sports to which it was more suited.

Television made big celebrities quickly. Comedian Milton Berle became known as Mr. Television because of his understanding of and ability to play comedy to a television audience. He began his shtick on television in 1948 on the *Texaco Star Theater* variety show. People stayed home on Tuesday nights to watch the program, which was credited with contributing to the sale of millions of TV sets.

Most programming in the 1950s was broadcast live. Several genres emerged during that time and have remained closely identified with the medium. News broadcasts, both local and national, became a staple at dinnertime. Newscasters like Edward R. Murrow, Walter Cronkite, and Howard K. Smith made the transition to television news. Murrow, whose voice calmed an anxious nation during World War II, brought his popular *Hear It Now* radio program to television on CBS. *See It Now* began on television in 1951 and was supplemented in 1953 with his *Person to Person.* Murrow tackled difficult subjects in both of his shows, most notably his refusal to report objectively on the histrionics of Senator Joseph McCarthy and his campaign to root out hidden Communists in America. By the time Murrow died in 1965, Walter Cronkite was seen as the face of news. On NBC, the news came to the American people via the *Huntley-Brinkley Report,* featuring Chet Huntley and David Brinkley as anchors, from 1956 to 1970. NBC's *Meet the Press,* which premiered on television in 1947 (making the transition from radio), is the longest-running program in U.S. television history. NBC also popularized morning television when *The Today Show* began in 1952. It made celebrities of a series of news interviewers, including Barbara Walters, Katie Couric, Jane Pauley, Tom Brokaw, and Bryant Gumbel. The other networks imitated, but even into the new millennium, *The Today Show* was king.

The immediacy of television was its strength. Americans watched John F. Kennedy take the oath of office as president in January 1961; they were glued to the television when John Glenn made the first manned orbit of the moon; they were transfixed when the much-loved Kennedy was felled by sniper fire the following year. When Neil Armstrong walked on the moon in July 1969, it was an event witnessed by an estimated 600 million people back on earth, thanks to television.

NBC's *Today Show* draws large crowds to Rockefeller Center every weekday morning. © AP Photo/Jason DeCrow.

The love affair with television news continued and accelerated, much to the chagrin of the presidents and their administrations. The journalistic coverage of the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 1970s often is credited with affecting its outcome. America had never seen a war up front and personal before because technology had stood in the way. But by the time the U.S. involvement in Vietnam accelerated in the 1960s, television was ready. For the first time, Americans watched the war unfold in their living rooms. The carnage was live and in color. Reported in newspapers and reinforced on television, the news from Asia was not pretty. America revolted. The protests that erupted on college campuses and in Washington, D.C., were also played out on the evening news. In March 1968, several hundred unarmed Vietnamese civilians were slaughtered by American troops in the village of My Lai. The devastation was covered up by the army but made public by a news reporter in November 1969. Two years later, the trial of Lieutenant William Calley for mass murder led the national newscasts night after night.

As the number of television stations increased, broadcasters took advantage of the ability to target both a local and a national audience. Local news shows usually focused on providing viewers with information they needed to know: weather and traffic, crime and punishment, and government. National news programs basically synthesized the national headlines of the day.

Situation comedies, dubbed *sitcoms,* roared to popularity in the 1950s with early shows like *Our Miss Brooks* (which had been a radio favorite) and Lucille Ball's *I Love Lucy.* That comedy, which lasted in various forms into the 1970s, garnered the largest television audience of the 1950s, when 21 million families turned on their sets to watch the episode when a pregnant Lucille Ball gave birth to her television son, Little Ricky, in January 1953. *I Love Lucy* also pioneered the now-standard practice of taping episodes, thus creating the concept of a rerun, which allows the show to be shown over and over. In fact, TV programs sometimes earn more money after they officially go off the air by being sold in syndication to television stations that can re-air them in a new time slot. *Seinfeld,* a popular 1990s comedy "about nothing," is the highest-earning sitcom ever in syndication.

As early as 1950, sitcom producers introduced a laugh track into their shows. This canned laughter provided viewers with cues on when to laugh and what was supposed to be funny. Sitcoms are the most enduring genre in television entertainment. *The Simpsons,* an animated show that actually parodies the genre, is the longest-running sitcom in U.S. history. It premiered in 1989 and was still running in 2007. Other popular sitcoms over the years included *All in the Family,* which pioneered the concept of biting

Will and Grace is one of the first American sitcoms to address issues with homosexuality. Courtesy of Photofest.

social commentary in the 1970s with its bigoted leading character, Archie Bunker; *Friends,* which chronicled the lives of six single New York friends; *Cheers,* which centered on the lives of people who worked and hung out in a bar in Boston; and *The Cosby Show,* about the family life of a lovable obstetrician, played by Bill Cosby.

Game shows also were popular in early television, before they were rocked by a cheating scandal that made producers shy away from the genre for a time. *The $64,000 Question* was the CBS television network program that brought the hammer down on game shows. Airing from 1955 to 1958, it was wildly popular and spawned imitations at other networks, including the show *Twenty-one.* The bubble burst when a contestant who lost on *Twenty-one* began talking publicly about how the show was rigged. Congress got involved and ultimately passed a federal law barring game tampering. Game shows slowly regained popularity in the 1960s and continue to appeal to viewers today. *Jeopardy!,* which first aired in 1964, had several lives under several television hosts, before it was broadcast in the early evening beginning in 1984 with Alex Trebek as its host. That game, which provides the answers and requires contestants to ask the questions, was still on the air in 2007. Produced by Merv Griffin, it usually aired just before or after *Wheel of Fortune,* a game that required players to guess common word phrases by filling in the blanks with letters. The game show genre produced several other notable programs, including the more recent *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?,* which had different versions in more than 60 countries around the word, and the granddaddy of them all, *The Price is Right,* which began in 1956.

Television dramas take two forms: soap operas, a carryover from radio and still a strong daytime staple on networks, and nighttime dramas, which feature recurring characters and often feature lawyers, police officers, detectives, cowboys, and doctors as the protagonists. Shows like *Perry Mason, Medical Center, Law & Order, Gunsmoke, Kojak, Matlock,* and *Marcus Welby, M.D.,* typically last one hour and are self-contained dramas. Soap operas feature ongoing story lines, and they need to be watched daily to understand the story line. *Guiding Light,* which premiered on television in 1952, is the longest running of this genre. Nighttime soap operas also have their niche. *Dallas,* which ran in the 1980s, was the most popular of this type. The show created an international buzz when the leading character was felled on the last episode of the 1980 season and viewers had to wait until the fall to learn the answer.

Sporting events were a natural draw for television. Live action sports generate great excitement. In fact, it was the promise of one of the longest-running sports variety programs in television history. "Spanning the globe to bring you the constant variety of sport . . . the thrill of victory . . . and the

agony of defeat . . . the human drama of athletic competition . . . this is *ABC's Wide World of Sports!*" was the voice-over introduction that opened the show, which debuted in 1961, beginning in the 1970s. The Super Bowl has become a national television event since 1967, generating a day of Super Bowl parties and prompting advertisers to create custom-made commercials for the broadcast. In fact, the commercials, the half-time show, the singing of the National Anthem, and the pregame events are often as much a part of the day as the game itself. Ninety-three million people in the United States watched Super Bowl XLI in 2007, according to the Nielsen Media Research.

In the early days of television, the anticipated broadcast of a sporting event could generate sales of television sets. The technology today has come a long way from the single, black-and-white camera positioned along the third base line for the Princeton-Columbia baseball game in 1939.[6] Some of the earliest broadcasts included the baseball World Series and boxing bouts. Television was, in some instances, able to deliver a better game than would be had at the ball park. The instant replay, which was put to limited use in 1955, allows viewers to decide whether officials got the call right. Powerful and sensitive cameras positioned in the outfield allowed fans to call balls and strikes. The 1st and 10 line provides television viewers with a virtual yellow line that marks the next first down.

Finally, no discussion of television genres would be complete without reporting on the most recent development, the reality show. *Candid Camera* featured people caught looking foolish on hidden camera, and the *Ted Mack Amateur Hour,* a talent show, both debuted on television in 1948, but the genre never gained the kind of wild devotion it experienced in the new millennium. In the United States, the most recent forerunner of the genre was probably *The Real World* on MTV. A group of young people who lived together were filmed in their daily lives. Then, competition was added to the genre in 2000 with the show *Survivor,* which brought a group of contestants to a remote island, challenged them with physical hurdles, and then had them voted off the show one by one. *American Idol,* a singing competition that allowed viewers to vote for their favorite contestants, began in 2002 and enjoyed the distinction as the most popular show on television in 2007. Reality television was king in the first decade of the new millennium and included off-beat and sometimes bizarre shows like *Wife Swap,* where two mothers changed places for a week; *Nanny 911,* in which a British nanny taught parents how to control their wild children; *The Bachelor,* in which a man got to woo a cadre of beautiful women and get rid of someone each week; and *Extreme Makeover,* in which a person was completely redone using plastic surgery.

Survivor started a new trend in American television. A combination of reality TV and game show, contestants are placed on teams and are given physical and mental challenges. At the end of each episode, one person is voted off of the show. Courtesy of Photofest.

Cinema

The story of American movies traces its beginnings to the nineteenth century, but the industry really was a child of the twentieth century. In the United States, inventor extraordinaire Thomas A. Edison's preoccupation with capturing moving objects on film fueled a $44 billion industry in 2006. From the five-second black-and-white film *Fred Ott's Sneeze,* which featured Edison's assistant in 1894, the movie industry burst on the entertainment scene.

While the newspaper industry fought off competition from other media, the film industry's story is one of adaptation. Television, VCRs, DVDs, pay-per-view, and other innovations could have decimated the film industry, but instead, it has thrived. The movie industry is a vital and vibrant industry that in the United States generates about 600 films each year.[7] It is the United States' biggest export.

Filmmaking in the United States began modestly enough. Edison's Black Maria studio in West Orange, New Jersey, began producing film shorts, including a 20-second popular item, *The Kiss,* which created a furor and was

notable for starting the discussion of censorship in regard to film as early as 1896.[8] Early short films found an audience in cities at Kinetescope Parlors, which allowed viewers to see snippets of film by paying 25 cents, an exorbitant price at the time.

The Great Train Robbery, produced in 1903 by one of Edison's employees, Edwin S. Porter, was notable for its creation of the modern film technique of using several camera positions for the same scene and then editing the film to enhance suspense, create tension, and improve the narrative. That 12-minute silent film also gave rise to the western film genre.

Films found a home at the nickelodeon, movie houses where viewers could see a series of short films beginning about 1905. They spread quickly around the United States, creating a huge demand for new films. Thus an industry was born. By 1909, there were 9,000 movie theaters in the United States. America was not alone in its interest in the budding film industry. Foreign films like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* in 1919 (from Germany) and others found audiences in the United States and contributed to the developing artistic techniques that included both direction and camera work.

While the narrative story emerged quickly as the vehicle for popular films, the films themselves were short, lasting only about 12 minutes (one reel), until David Wark Griffith developed an interest in directing. Griffith had been hired as an actor in Edison's studio but liked being behind the camera instead. He convinced financiers to back his idea for a longer, melodramatic approach to the cinema. Griffith not only influenced the development of the film industry with his innovative ideas, but he also was at least partly responsible for the concentration of the business in the Los Angeles neighborhood we know as Hollywood.

Griffith was working for Biograph as a filmmaker, when he was sent to California with a troupe of actors in 1910 to film *In Old California.* The residents of the Hollywood neighborhood welcomed the actors. The rest is history. Hollywood, the location, has become synonymous with Hollywood, the film industry, and while not all movies are filmed in Hollywood today, it is without a doubt the capital of the moviemaking industry, not just in the United States, but in the world.

Griffith's cinematic contributions included the development of a full-length feature film. He also began the long-held tradition of translating a novel into a film. Griffith purchased the right to the Thomas Dixon novel *The Clansman,* and began filming. When *The Birth of a Nation* was released in 1915, it ran a whopping 3 hours and 10 minutes and changed the direction of film production. *The Birth of a Nation,* which presents the story of the Civil War and Reconstruction from a Southern perspective, has been dismissed as a racist interpretation of history, but in terms of cinematic development, its

importance cannot be overstated. It firmly established the concept of storytelling and proved that viewers were willing to sit still and watch raptly if the movie was presented in a gripping fashion. It also established Griffith as a powerful force in the industry. Griffith continued his filmmaking career, and other directors imitated his methods.

Another early innovator was Mack Sennett, who worked with Griffith but left in 1912 and started his own studio, Keystone. Sennett had a knack for comedy and was adept at preserving the humor while filming. He was responsible for the development of the biggest star of the silent film era, Charlie Chaplin. Most famous for his persona of *The Little Tramp,* Chaplin donned a bowler hat, sported a tiny mustache, and twirled a cane in films, while he became embroiled in ridiculous, and funny, predicaments. Chaplin reigned supreme throughout the silent film era of the 1920s but faded as a leading man after sound was introduced with the movie *The Jazz Singer* in 1927.

The silent film era included the development of serial stories that were updated periodically, a precursor to the soap operas of radio and television. Notable in this group was *The Perils of Pauline,* which began in 1914 and featured a damsel in distress who was regularly saved from burning buildings, railroad tracks, and the side of a cliff. The series played on the concept of a cliff-hanger ending that brought the viewers back to see the next episode.

The impact of sound in film history is enormous. Audiences flocked to *The Jazz Singer* and clamored for more. Actors whose voices did not lend them to film were swept aside in favor of those who were photogenic and whose voices were pleasant.

Moviemaking grew into an industry that was centered around a few powerful studios. The studio system, as it came to be known, revolved around five companies: RKO, Paramount, 20th Century Fox, MGM, and Warner Brothers. Most of the financially successful films of the 1930s and 1940s were produced and distributed through these studios.

Despite the desperate financial situation of many Americans during the Great Depression of the 1930s, people went to the movies. Whether it was to escape their dreary existence, or live vicariously through the exotic lives of film stars, or merely to pass the time for a few hours, Americans loved the movies. As movie production and techniques became more sophisticated, the film industry became the leviathan of the entertainment industry—about 80 million people (more than half the U.S. population) went to the movies every week. Films like *Gone with the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz* in 1939 showcased the industry's storytelling and techniques in living color.

The 1930s also saw the introduction of feature-length animation, most notably the work of master animator Walt Disney. Disney Studio's foray into filmmaking began with *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in 1937 and

continued with such instant classics as *Pinocchio* (1940) and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), to name a few. Even after Disney's death in 1966, and into the new millennium, Disney Studios continued its preeminent position among animators with films like *The Lion King* (1994), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), and *Tarzan* (1999).

World War II saw the film industry become an arm of U.S. propaganda. Some leading directors, including Frank Capra and John Ford, actually made films for the government. Stars like Clark Gable, who actually joined the army, and his wife, Carol Lombard, who died in a plane crash during a campaign to sell war bonds, typified Hollywood patriotism during the war.

Newspapers were not the only medium threatened by the invention of and consumer love affair with television. The 1950s and 1960s saw the rise of television as a prominent and popular medium. Hollywood quaked. The studio system faded, while American films tried to demonstrate that watching a film in a theater was a bigger and better experience.

As the influence of Hollywood spread around the world, filmmaking branched into many genres. Musicals were made possible when sound was introduced in 1927; films like *Singin' in the Rain* in 1952 and *The Sound of Music* in 1965 are still considered classics. Musicals are still a viable genre. *Chicago* won the Academy Award in 2002, while *Dreamgirls* was critically acclaimed in 2006.

The romantic comedy genre made stars of Cary Grant, Doris Day, Rock Hudson, and Jimmy Stewart beginning in the 1930s. Moviegoers came to expect nail-biting suspense films whenever Alfred Hitchcock directed, and his films, including *Rear Window, The Thirty-nine Steps, Vertigo,* and *North by Northwest,* delivered spine-tingling fear in viewers. Director John Ford and star John Wayne typified the western genre, while Frank Capra focused on uplifting, happy endings typified by the still popular Christmas classic *It's a Wonderful Life* or the patriotic and inspirational *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington.*

It would be remiss not to note the contributions of current-day directors and actors. Director George Lucas's six-part Star Wars epic revived the science fiction genre with the release of the first film, *Star Wars,* in 1977. Steven Spielberg is one of the foremost contemporary directors and producers, whose oeuvre includes 1975s *Jaws;* 1981s *Raiders of the Lost Ark,* which launched Harrison Ford to superstardom; and 1993s best picture, *Schindler's List,* which also won him his first Academy Award for Best Director.

Other leading directors of contemporary Hollywood included Woody Allen, Martin Scorsese, Oliver Stone, Spike Lee, Penny Marshall, and Quentin Tarantino. Among movie actors in 2007, Keanu Reeves raked in about $206 million for his work in the *Matrix* sequels; Tom Cruise, Tom Hanks, and

Jack Nicholson were also good dealmakers by insisting on a percent of the box office.

While other media compete for Americans' time and can lure them away from theaters, the movies are still king. In 2006, the Motion Picture Association reported that the total U.S. box office take came to $9.49 billion, with *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* pulling in $423 million. Yet while going to the movies is still a viable activity, Americans are increasingly staying home to watch their flicks. In the United States, 37 percent preferred to watch movies in the comfort of their own home, according to the Motion Picture Association.[9] That trend began in the 1980s, when the VCR first was made available in the United States. Video stores allowed consumers to rent relatively newly released movies to watch at home. The technology shifted in the late 1990s to DVDs, but the home market remained strong. Cable television also entered the fray with pay-per-view technology that allowed consumers to watch feature films and on demand offerings.

The story of film censorship in the United States is almost as old as the industry itself. As early as 1907, nickelodeons were shut down for allowing children to view inappropriate short films. The film industry wasted no time policing itself. By 1916, the National Association of the Motion Picture

The movies in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series have been some of the world's highest-grossing films. Courtesy of Photofest.

Industry was formed to oversee film content, and when that failed, to satisfy critics, filmmakers created the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, led by former postmaster William H. Hays. The association accepted a Production Code, which came to be known as the Hays Code, in 1930. This self-censorship initiative was responsible for shaping the treatment of sex and violence in Hollywood in the 1930s. Some did not think it went far enough. The Catholic Legion of Decency was formed in 1934 to combat what it believed was a corruption of morals by the film industry. The list created by the Legion condemned certain movies it deemed inappropriate for anyone. Others it listed as appropriate for children or for adults. The list lasted until 1978 and condemned such movies as *From Russia with Love, Rosemary's Baby,* and *Grease.*

In 1968, the Motion Picture Association of America created its own voluntary film rating system, which is still in use today. The initial system included the ratings G for general audiences, M for mature audiences, R for restricted (under 16 not admitted without a parent or guardian), and X for no one under 17 admitted. The system has been fine-tuned over the years to include the PG (parental guidance suggested) and PG-13 (parental guidance suggested for age 13).

While the earliest film actors were anonymous, the star system emerged during the 1920s. The Marx Brothers epitomized comedy; Jean Harlow was a vamp; Edward G. Robinson was a gangster; Bela Legosi was typecast in horror films; Cary Grant and Clark Gable were two of the earliest leading men. As Hollywood actors and actresses became celebrities, they were able to command large sums of money for their work. Hollywood became known as Tinseltown.

The success of the 1939 film *Gone with the Wind* ushered in a golden age for Hollywood. The movie, based on the runaway best seller by Margaret Mitchell, won 10 Academy Awards in 1939 and held the record for making money for many years, before contemporary ticket prices knocked it out. It still holds the record for the most tickets sold.

The Academy Awards to recognize achievement in film were begun in 1929 in Los Angeles. The winners were given a distinctive gold statuette of a man to honor their achievements. Legend has it that film star Bette Davis, who won two and was nominated 10 times, dubbed the statue "Oscar" because it reminded her of her first husband. Held annually in the spring, the Oscars attract an international audience and generate hoopla for celebrities, who prance along a red carpet into the auditorium.

While other countries have established notable film industries, most especially Japan, India, and Italy, American films are the undisputed world leader. In fact, as moviegoing habits shifted with television viewing and then the VCR technology that brought the theaters into homes, American filmmakers

turned increasingly to the export market to make up the financial difference. By 2007, more than half of American film revenues came from the foreign market, forcing filmmakers to pay attention to how a movie will play with foreign audiences. It was by no means a one-way street. Increasingly, Americans were open to viewing foreign films. The Chinese film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* grossed $128 million in the United States in 2000.

Magazines

Everyone reads magazines in the United States. Americans can be found thumbing through pages in doctors' and dentists' waiting rooms, at the barbershop, and even in line in the supermarket. Magazines, which are often highly specialized, are big business. In 2005, the average circulation for all magazines was a whopping 369,620,102—that is more than one magazine for every man, woman, and child. The Magazine Publishers of America estimates that 84 percent of the population over age 18 reads magazines, while it counts 18,267 separate titles, with 6,325 consumer titles.[10] In fact, in 2005, 350 new titles were introduced, most focusing on the niche marketing that has been so successful for magazine publishers. While broad-based magazines like *Newsweek* and *Time* continue to attract readers, publishers are more likely to find success introducing publications that fill small markets, such as *Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel, Acoustic Guitar,* and *Bow & Arrow Hunting,* to name a few.

Magazines began in the United States in 1741 in the American colonies. Ben Franklin's *General Magazine* debuted three days after his rival, Andrew Bradford, circulated his *American Magazine* in January 1741. The colonies might have been ready for one magazine, but two was just too much. Neither succeeded. Within six months, they had both folded. Over the next three decades, magazines tried to gain a foothold in the colonies, but none thrived. While newspapers became important propaganda tools during the Revolution, they were unable to garner a stable circulation base.

From the onset, magazines were a potpourri of many topics. Poetry, essays, politics, and the arts came together under one cover. The paper was cheap newsprint, and the covers were plain. Artwork and illustration were uncommon, although Paul Revere provided a series of cartoon engravings on copper for the *Royal American Magazine* that was published just before the war began. In all, 98 magazines were published during the eighteenth century, but one by one, they succumbed to economic realities. Magazines during that century were anything but vehicles for mass circulation and hovered at a circulation of about 500.[11]

It was not until the nineteenth century that magazines grew to be a staple of news and information. The *Saturday Evening Post* began publishing in

Philadelphia in 1821. Around this time, there also was a growth in literary magazines and religious publications. Initially, magazines appealed to the upper classes, with their literary content and the high subscription costs. Yet that characteristic faded as the century, with its swelling literacy and education rates, progressed. *Harper's Monthly* and *Atlantic Monthly* appeared at mid-century and catered to literary minds, but publications like *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* and *Harper's Weekly* drew a more popular audience. The illustrations in these magazines, especially during the Civil War, appealed to the masses and paved the way for the picture magazines like *Look* and *Life* that captured American imaginations beginning in the 1930s.

The age of muckraking was most visible in magazines beginning about 1900. *McClure's* magazine had been founded in 1893 by Samuel McClure, who charged only 15 cents for each edition. By 1900, it had a solid circulation of 350,000, when it began poking its nose in the public's business. With solid staff writers like Ida Tarbell and Lincoln Steffens, *McClure's* was poised to make some noise. It became known as the most rigorous of the muckrakers after the publication of Tarbell's exposé of the abuses of Standard Oil and Steffens's series of articles on public and political corruption. The fervor of muckraking magazines faded with the onset of World War I. A new type of magazine emerged in the decade following the war. The weekly news magazines that we still know today trace their roots to this period. *Time* magazine was founded by Henry Luce and Briton Hadden. Hadden's involvement was short-lived, and the magazine in many respects reflected the tastes and politics of Luce. The first issue appeared on March 3, 1923. The news was mostly information rewritten from the week's *New York Times.* Editorial analysis was a part of the news coverage. The success of *Time* gave way to other ventures, including *Fortune, Life,* and *Sports Illustrated,* all of which survive to date. *Time* remained the most robust of the newsweeklies, ranking 11th in circulation, with a weekly circulation of 4 million. *Newsweek,* founded in 1933, ranked 16th, while the third popular news magazine, *U.S. News and World Report,* ranked 32nd.

The importance of women's magazines and their growth throughout the nineteenth century cannot be overstated. Women's place was the home and its domestic responsibilities, and women's magazines celebrated this sphere of influence. *Godey's Lady's Book,* which set the standard for women's publications for about 70 years, was begun in 1830 as the *Lady's Book* by Louis Godey. He then purchased the *Ladies' Magazine* and merged the two publications into *Godey's Lady's Book* and hired as its editor Sarah Josepha Hale. *Godey's* published original material at a time when many magazines were merely repositories for previously published articles. Hale sought out the nation's popular authors and poets for her monthly magazine and was re-

warded with the likes of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and others. The magazine also provided women hungry for the fashions of Europe with illustrations of the latest dress styles. The magazine declined in popularity after the Civil War and eventually ceased publication in 1898, but its influence on generations of women's magazines is indisputable. Its mix of fashion, literature, and domestic, health, and child-rearing advice is evidenced in magazines even today. As *Godey's* circulation waned, *Ladies' Home Journal* gained ground. It topped the 1 million circulation mark in 1889, providing short stories, serialized novels, good artwork, and the promise, in an age of disreputable advertising, that it monitored the claims of its advertisers. In an era when newspaper and magazine editors were celebrities in the way that movie stars are today, *Ladies' Home Journal*'s editor Edward W. Bok, who took the reins in 1890, was the visible head of this women's publication for 39 years.

The *Seven Sisters,* a term that referred to the most powerful women's magazines of the twentieth century, included *Good Housekeeping, Ladies' Home Journal, McCall's, Redbook, Better Homes & Gardens, Family Circle,* and *Woman's Day.* These were the biggest guns in the women's magazine category, with astounding circulations throughout most of the twentieth century. *McCall's,* initially a vehicle to sell McCall's dress patterns to consumers, had a circulation of 6 million at its peak in the 1960s. In response to the growing popularity of *O, the Oprah Magazine,* the Hearst Corporation monthly that debuted in 2000, *McCall's* changed its name to *Rosie* in 2001 in an attempt to serve as a platform for talk show celebrity Rosie O'Donnell. That relationship flopped, and the magazine folded in 2002. All of the other Seven Sisters still publish. *Better Homes & Gardens,* with a circulation of 7.6 million, was the fifth largest magazine in the country at the end of 2005. *Good Housekeeping* was seventh, with 4.6 million; *Family Circle, Ladies' Home Journal,* and *Woman's Day* rounded out the top 10, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations. *O* enjoys a 2.5 million circulation and a national ranking at number 23.[12]

While traditional women's magazines enjoy healthy circulations, niche magazines are the prevailing trend today. Magazines like *Southern Living, Brides, Parents, Endless Vacation,* and *Cooking Light* relied on smaller circulation populations but featured readers hungry for information about their topics. By playing to small pockets of readers, magazines have managed to thrive during a time that newspapers saw their influence waning.

The largest-circulation magazine in the United States in 2005 was the *AARP* magazine, with a 22.6 million paid circulation (membership in AARP was considered a subscription to the magazine); the *AARP Bulletin* ranked second, followed by *Reader's Digest.* That monthly magazine, which began in 1922, was the brainchild of DeWitt Wallace and featured articles condensed

from other publications. That formula is still successful today. A staple for years in doctors' and dentists' offices, the *Digest* also relied on monthly regular features, including humor columns that featured pithy anecdotes sent in from readers. The oldest continually published magazine, the *New England Journal of Medicine,* began in 1812.

Media in the Twenty-first Century

In 2005, the Kaiser Foundation asked 8- to 18-year-olds to describe what media they had used the day before. The results are enough to send fear into the hearts of some of the media. Eighty-one percent of the group had watched television for an average daily time of a numbing three hours and four minutes. Twenty-one percent of the group had watched for more than five hours. Fifty-four percent had used the computer for recreational purposes totaling an hour. Thirty-four percent had read a newspaper (that figure contrasted with the 42% who had glanced at a newspaper five years before). The term *glanced* is correct, indeed, because the average time the group had looked at the newspaper was six minutes. Magazines fared slightly better: 47 percent had read a magazine in 2004 (compared to 55% in 1999). The average interaction lasted 14 minutes.[13] If this, then, is the future of the media, traditional newspapers and magazines have reason to be concerned. Newspaper readers are a loyal group, but it is a learned habit, and clearly the younger generation is not taking to it. By contrast, 67 percent of adults over age 65 read a newspaper in 2006. The bad thing about that group is that they have a tendency to die; just two years earlier, that figure had been at 74 percent.

Another national survey in 2005 showed that 59 percent of people get their news from local television, while 38 percent read a local paper, and only 12 percent read a national newspaper.[14] The demands for leisure time are great. Electronic explosions continue with new and better gadgets introduced each year before the holiday buying time: television, Tivo, iPods, Play Station, satellite radio, cell phones, Blackberries, Sidekicks, and always new and better computers.

Newspapers have been forced to change. Internet sites like Craig's List, eBay, Monster.com, and Autotrader have taken a bite out of the once lucrative classified advertising. Combined classified ads peaked in 2000 with earnings of more than $19.6 billion. Those dollars are slipping—by 2003, the total had slipped to $15.8 billion, according to the Newspaper Association of America. Classified ads had provided a cash cow for years; they were cheap to produce, with little overhead but a typist. Now, newspapers are fighting to regain their position as the purveyor of classified ads by making alliances with online providers.

Overall, the future is grim for newspapers. Profit margins have slid from 26 percent in 2000 to about 17 percent in 2007.[15] Circulation was also slipping, even though 51 million people still buy newspapers.

The smartest news organizations have accommodated the change and embraced Internet avenues. Newspapers, for example, have banded together to create a national employment service, CareerBuilder, to challenge the domination of Monster. In other advertising areas, the well-being of the newspaper revenues reflects the health of business and industry in general. Fewer large department stores translate into fewer Sunday ad sections. A downtrend in home sales means a dip in real estate advertising.

Not all the news for newspapers is dismal. Some newspaper companies have taken a lesson from magazine publishing and turned to niche publications. *The Miami Herald,* for example, has a separate daily edition in Spanish for its large Hispanic population. Gannett, the country's largest media conglomerate, has 90 newspaper markets but more than 1,000 niche publications in those areas, focusing on travel, health, and other topics of interest to its readers. Some newspaper companies have diversified onto the Internet, buying online companies or establishing joint ventures with some of the online giants. The message to newspapers is clear: change or die.

Newspapers are the oldest form of mass communication, but in the twenty-first century, they constitute just one aspect of an increasingly complex media system that is constantly evolving. The United States—indeed, the world—is in the midst of a communication revolution whose ultimate outcome cannot easily be predicted. How Americans will interact with their media in the future is fodder for science fiction writers.

Much is at stake. The future of journalism as a profession is unclear. News organizations have turned to their viewers and readers to provide information. Audiences respond to instant polling because it gives them a chance to have their voices heard. Popular television programs like *American Idol* can generate millions of viewers' votes: 74 million votes were cast in the *American Idol* finale in 2007. News outlets get hundreds of thousands of votes when they ask viewers their opinions on topical survey questions, and when a news outlet like CNN asks its viewers to submit news tips and stories, they respond. The news outlet then shares video clips of dramatic fires, eyewitness accounts of natural disasters, and first-person stories of human interest. The Internet, with its unlimited capacity for news, has opened the news hole. When news radio WINS tells listeners, "You give us 22 minutes, we'll give you the world," it underscores the fact that the radio station only has 22 minutes' worth of news and information. Network news shows last 30 minutes, including commercials. A typical newspaper is 60 percent advertis-

ing, 40 percent news stories. Thus the role of editor includes the burden of gatekeeping: deciding what news is and what is not. The Internet, with its limitless capacity, negates that role. News media can post any number of stories on their sites and let the reader or viewer decide what he is interested in.

The communication revolution continues. Like Winston Churchill's quip during World War II, this revolution is nowhere near its end. It is not even the beginning of the end, but it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning. Where it is headed is unclear. The only thing that is certain is that it will continue to be one heck of a ride.

Notes

1. "Joint Statement by William P. Van Ness and Nathaniel Pendleton on the Duel between Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr," *New York Morning Chronicle,* July 17, 1804, reprinted in Louis L. Snyder and Richard B. Morris, eds., *A Treasury of Great Reporting* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962), 38–39.

2. Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 438.

3. Mott, *American Journalism,* 679.

4. M. Thomas Inge and Dennis Hall, eds., *The Greenwood Guide to American Popular Culture* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 4:1466.

5. Audit Bureau of Circulations, "Top 100 Newspapers in the United States," March 31, 2006, Information Please Database, http://www/infoplease.com/ipea/A0004420.html.

6. See "Sports and Television" from the Museum of Broadcast Communications, http://www.museum.tv/archives/etv/S/htmlS/sportsandte/sportsandte.html.

7. See the Motion Picture Association of America statistics, http://www.mpaa.org.

8. A time line of film industry development can be seen at http://www.filmsite.org.

9. For current film industry statistics, see the Motion Picture Association statistics at http://www.mpaa.org.

10. See *The Magazine Handbook,* Magazine Publishers of America, http://www.magazine.org.

11. Sammye Johnson and Patricia Prijatel, *Magazine Publishing* (Lincolnwood, IL: NTC/Contemporary, 2000), 49.

12. Audit Bureau of Circulations, "Top 100."

13. "Use of Individual Media by All 8 to 18 Year Olds," in *Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8–18 Year-Olds* (Menlo Park, CA: Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, March 2005), 23–33.

14. "News Source: Where People Get News," Pew Internet Project December 2005 Survey, http://www.infoplease.com.

15. Anya Kamenetz, "Public Interest," *Fast Company* 114 (2007): 38.

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8

Performing Arts

Pamela Lee Gray

> The thing about performance, even if it's only an illusion, is that it is a celebration of the fact that we do contain within ourselves infinite possibilities.
>
> —Sidney Smith (1771–1845)

Americans love to be entertained. *American Idol, Ted Mack's Amateur Hour,* and a host of other similar television and radio programs broadcast over the decades illustrate the American fascination with live performance, professional or amateur. A century ago, social commentators argued whether the country should consciously develop a shared performance culture. Instead, the geography of the American continent influenced development of a regional character, and instead of sculpting a shared identifiable tradition, these regional styles, along with some borrowed elements from the country's immigrants, created a unique culture in theater, music, and dance.

Theater

Early American theater mimicked European performances and acting techniques. Although records are incomplete for this period, most theater scholars name Anthony Aston as the first professional actor in America in 1703. (Aston was, however, preceded by Native American spiritualists who regularly played roles in rituals.) Williamsburg, Virginia, boasted a dance school and theater as early as 1716. Philadelphia constructed a playhouse where Pickleherring pieces, a genre of acting that followed European clowning techniques, were performed. The City of Brotherly Love was the center of

colonial theater activity until 1825. Walter Murray and Thomas Kean took simple shows on tour through many of the colonies. Charleston surged ahead of the other colonial cities with a new theater constructed in 1736; at that time, the New York City theater scene paled in comparison.[1]

The London Company of Comedians (later changed to the American Company), led by Lewis Hallan Sr., and then by David Douglas, held a monopoly on professional theater productions from 1752 until 1755, when Hallan's son took over his father's part of the team. The pair constructed and revitalized theaters throughout the colonies, much to the disapproval of religious groups, who held that plays advocated immoral behavior (despite the subtitle *A Moral Dialogue* attached to most plays' titles). Douglas built two of the most important theaters in the colonies in New York in the 1760s and put on the first play written by a native playwright. The Continental Congress banned all stage performances in October 1774, but American playwrights continued working even as British troops captured cities and put on their own military performances in the colonial theaters. The period after the Revolutionary War was a time of rapid theater construction, as acting companies returned and new troupes were formed. French-speaking theaters were constructed in New Orleans and Charleston. New York challenged Philadelphia for the title of theater capital of the colonies but was not recognized as a serious contender until 1800.[2]

There is a perception in America of a clear division between art and the business of art. Vaudeville and musicals were considered a separate venue from Chautauqua and operatic performances. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century promoters of stage musical and dance performances found that production funds were easy to obtain if the act was perceived as having a reasonable morality, but more importantly, a chance for widespread popularity. Stephen Price, the first professional manager in America, began promoting European actors in the United States in 1809. American actors, however, were not cast in important plays in Europe until much later. Edwin Forrest was the first American actor to make a name abroad. Playwriting contests, beginning in 1828, encouraged homegrown American writing.

As the United States acquired land with each act passed by Congress beginning in 1815, theaters and acting companies moved into the new territories. Floating theaters were located on showboats that traveled the Mississippi River. The Boston Museum began its stock touring company in 1841, and the troupe prospered for nearly 50 years. San Francisco received professional acting troupes from the east in 1850; actors were well compensated for their long journey and for facing dangers in the western territories.

The 1850s established a clear American tradition on the stage, with the high period for theater profits running from the Civil War era until 1915.

Matilda Heron, an actress with an overtly dramatic technique, rose to fame in 1857 in historical costume dramas that were all the rage. Most of the plays, if viewed today, would be considered campy with their stilted, unnatural dialogue, but the theater moved toward a more realistic approach in the following decades. The melodrama, a style that rose to popularity in the 1860s, always had a dramatic turning point such as the rescue of someone (usually a damsel tied to railroad tracks). One of the most famous of the moral plays was *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* which opened in 1852 with a mostly white cast in blackface. Blacks played other roles, but not the major parts in the production. Translations of French plays were also popular during this decade.

By the 1870s, plays about social issues were in vogue; comedies and dramas covered timely issues. Territorial expansion and the rise of the American West was a popular topic that aligned with the phenomenal sales of the dime novels, purportedly chronicling the lives and times of gunslingers, outlaws, and mysterious natives of the new territories. A star system developed beginning in the 1880s, with Edwin Booth, Edwin Forrest, and Charlotte Cushman commanding top salaries. John Drew and Georgina Drew Barrymore (an ancestor of the contemporary Drew Barrymore) followed. Popular actors, prior to the turn of the century, regularly built their own theaters to showcase their talents.[3]

Circuses attracted crowds in Europe, and this performance tradition was brought to the colonies. The first tented show was used in 1825 for the (Joshua Purdy) Brown and (Lewis) Bailey Circus. This allowed flexibility in folding up the tent and transferring the performers, animals, and temporary structures to a new city along the route. Prior to that time, circuses required large structures or construction of a semipermanent building for even the smallest shows. With names such as the Great Overland, Dog and Pony, and the Wild West Show, troupes of acrobats—performers skilled in shooting, knife throwing, and horseback riding—brought to eastern cities a stylized version of the West.[4]

Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill had traveling shows that recreated fictionalized battles between Native Americans and cavalry troops. Buffaloes were transported from town to town in an attempt to recreate the West for eastern audiences. The largest modern circuses were the Ringling Brothers, founded in 1886, and C. F. Bailey & Company's Famous Menagerie, collected originally in 1870 by P. T. Barnum to tour under the name Grand Traveling Museum, Menagerie, Caravan and Circus. When the two combined, they came close to living up to the billing Barnum used for the company, "The Greatest Show on Earth." The circuses of Bailey and Barnum, when combined with the huge touring company of the Ringling Brothers—Gus, Alf, Al, Charles, John, and Otto of Baraboo, Wisconsin—were without competition in 1907

for the title of greatest on earth. Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey shows continue to perform today, with two touring troupes throughout the United States and Canada. Each year, a performer is selected to be the featured headliner for marketing the tour.[5]

Part of the early spectacle of the circus featured a person on horseback serenading the audience in the sawdust ring. Spirituals were frequently sung, and this tradition was adopted in the later minstrel format. The organizational structure of the minstrel show was established between 1843 and 1850. Edwin P. Christy made his name synonymous with this type of theater as the white-faced master of ceremonies, known as Mr. Interlocutor, who directed the three distinct parts of the production: the formal opening, with an introduction; the second section (the olio), which featured a collection of variety acts, including at least one long speech and a man dressed in women's clothing acting in a so-called wench segment; and the finale, later known as the walk around, that showed the actors promenading around the stage, reminding the audience of their part in the variety portion of the show. The finale of the longer productions incorporated a short play, usually depicting plantation life, or a watered-down version of a well-known Shakespearean tragedy.

The music was an important feature of minstrel shows. To the audience's right was a banjo or tambourine player, whom the master of ceremonies referred to as Mr. Tambo (and later as Mr. Lean). The left side of the stage featured a man, Mr. Bones or Mr. Fat, who played rhythm with wooden spoons or bone clappers. In the center rear stage was a group of singers and dancers, given names such as Congo Melodists or New Orleans Serenaders, who added variety to the performance in between acts. Additional instrumentation was also located to the rear of the stage and included bass, drums, and fiddles. The early minstrel bands were the precursors to the modern jazz band in formation and the types of instruments used. The stage became an oval of talent, with the guests performing in the middle facing the audience. The repartee and interaction was fast, and the humor was under the direction of a competent Mr. Interlocutor. People from all social classes and religions attended minstrel shows; unlike burlesque and later vaudeville performances, most ministers did not speak from the pulpit against attendance at minstrelsy. Minstrels' popularity lasted until the 1870s, when African American actors and performers began to be used with white actors in performances and theater construction became more widespread.[6]

Burlesque used the minstrel show format but expanded the type of performances to include more leg. In an age when the uncovered ankle or wrist would bring more than a raised eyebrow, the appearance of legs (even seen through thick tights) was shocking to moralists. The most popular burlesque

first arrived from Europe, and the best-known actress was Lydia Thompson, who led a troupe of British Blondes that filled theaters in the late 1870s and the early 1880s. Burlesque, too, developed its own unique format. The first section of the show featured only singing and dancing women (a rarity in early theater) and male comedians. The second section followed the format of the minstrel shows with variety acts, and the third part offered the walk around, or grand finale, with finely dressed but scantily clad women parading on the stage. This walk was later taken on a long lighted runway that extended out into the audience. The early burlesque shocked sensibilities with the fact that female performers were included in usual entertainment fare, but the farther west the theater genre moved, the rowdier and rawer the burlesque became.[7]

The Ziegfeld Follies, the brainchild of Florenz Ziegfeld, proved that sex did sell. Ziegfeld used the French Folies Bergère as inspiration for his annual extravaganza that included modeling, posing, and female formations by his famous Ziegfeld girls. He claimed his productions "glorified the American girl," though the earliest featured the European actress Anna Held. In his production *Miss Innocence* (1908), each female was dressed elegantly, often in an elaborate headdress. Held and Ziegfeld split in 1913, but he continued to produce large-scale musicals with other stars. Singer Eddie Cantor, comedians W. C. Fields, Will Rogers, and Fanny Brice, and paired dancers featuring the latest dance steps were featured in the vaudeville-type Follies shows. Irving Berlin was a regular composer for the troupe, and Joseph Urban laid out the artistic design for the elaborate staging and set decoration. The Follies began in 1907 and ended in 1928, and then Ziegfeld transferred his staging to the big screen in a series of films that included elaborately choreographed dance productions before he died in 1932.[8]

The Minsky Brothers (Morton, Billy, Abe, and Herbert) made burlesque into an art form from 1900 until 1935 from their chain of theaters in New York. Belly dancers were first introduced, and then lighted runways, and ultimately performances showcasing strip tease dancers wearing twirling tassels, a costume innovation introduced in 1921. Gypsy Rose Lee, Anne Corio, Willie Howard, Jackie Gleason, and Phil Silvers (who would later become family favorites on television) as well as Abbot and Costello (film comedians after their stint in burlesque) were well-known burlesque entertainers until 1942, when burlesque was banned. The remaining performers went into strip clubs and Las Vegas shows in the early 1950s, after the circuit was shut down by police enforcing pornography laws.[9]

Vaudeville was a variety show that developed from circus performances, the variety portion of minstrel, burlesque, and patent medicine shows. The term *vaudeville* was used early in the 1870s by Benjamin Franklin Keith,

considered to be the Father of Vaudeville. Keith opened his own theater and museum in Boston in 1883, and from the profits, he then constructed the Bijou Theater. His productions followed strict standards of acceptable performance, allowing working-class Americans to attend in large numbers. Edward F. Albee later joined Keith as a partner, but the team had fierce competition. The two men were able to control the circuit until well after Keith's death through the establishment of booking agencies such as United Booking Artists and the Vaudeville Manager's Association; these limited the acts' participation in theaters that the team did not own. They pioneered the use of continuous shows lasting 12 hours, with performances by 7–10 live acts. Performers in upscale vaudeville and traditional theater houses had only two performances each day. Vaudeville never died, but rather faded away with the invention of radio and expanded construction of inexpensive movie palaces. Many popular actors of the 1920s through 1940 trained in vaudeville, including Bob Hope and Al Jolson. Over 25,000 performers graced the vaudeville stages from the 1880s through the 1920s.[10]

Theater fans make a clear distinction between regional theater and the rural theater of summer stock, even though summer stock usually attracted audiences from a specific region. The distinction between the two is that regional theater was considered highbrow and summer stock lowbrow. Regional theater had professional actors, playhouses, and productions, while summer stock frequently used amateur actors, some of whom even paid to be involved in the performances. This should not diminish the significance of summer stock in building culture in rural America. As the once-massive Chautauqua circuit faded, summer stock theater rose to popularity in the 1920s and 1930s in the Northeast. Professional and amateur actors, stage crews, production designers, and directors were hired each summer to put on a group of plays, or a new play each week, in independent theaters that attracted upper- and middle-class vacationers from nearby summer resorts. Some theater historians claim that summer stock is the only true regional theater in the United States. English and early American theaters had resident actor stocks, but summer stock did not operate year-round. English theater companies did not have a separate group to be involved exclusively in summer productions.

Summer stock theaters operated during the months of June to September, from Maine to Virginia to Pennsylvania in the west. By the 1930s, some houses offered touring companies, and most had a permanent playhouse. Summer stock venues ranged from converted barns to small theaters constructed specifically for the permanent summer company. Early playhouses used local talent, then shifted to the star system that employed a featured actor (often on hiatus from Broadway shows that were closed during the hot summer months of July and August), and finally used a combination of the

two during the 1960s. Playwright Eugene O'Neill premiered his first work in summer stock at the Provincetown Wharf Theatre in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, in 1918. Summer stock's popularity first came with the automobile, which allowed escape from the summer heat of the city, and the new road system that made getting to rural resorts easy.[11]

American theater came into its own during World War I. European plays and actors were not visiting as frequently, and the influence from Europe on American staging and plays was minimal. The First International Exhibition of Modern Art, held in 1913 at the building that normally housed the 67th Regiment Armory in New York City, with its American and European paintings and sculpture, challenged the traditional definition of art and encouraged people working on the stage, and in set and costume design, to take greater artistic risks. The Broadway theaters in New York became the center of America's theater world at the turn of the century, routinely taking productions from Philadelphia and Chicago.

During the Depression years of the 1930s, theaters received funds from the Federal Theatre Project, a part of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration (WPA) that provided salaries for unemployed designers, writers, actors, and stage workers. The program, under the direction of Hallie Flanagan, came under fire in the late 1930s for employing members of the Socialist and Communist parties and for producing works that attacked big business. *The Living Newspaper,* a short-lived experiment in theater design, was abandoned when federal funding was abruptly cut after elected officials objected to criticism from the quickly written plays that interpreted the economic, political, and social issues from the front pages of the news. The electric industry was mocked for the high prices for service in the play *Power.*[12]

The period from 1900 to 1932 saw theaters in New York City dwindle from 5,000 houses to only 132. Travel was limited during the Depression and World War II due to fuel shortages and restrictions on hard-to-find products such as natural rubber, which was used to manufacture automobile tires. After World War II, there was a resurgence in theater and summer stock productions. The decades between 1945 and 1965 are considered the brightest of the Broadway stage. The plays or musicals of Lerner and Loewe, Tennessee Williams, Rogers and Hammerstein, William Inge, and Arthur Miller were performed to small audiences in theaters that were built decades before, without expensive audio and lighting equipment: the play was the thing. Musicals starring Shirley MacLaine, dramas with headliners such as Geraldine Page and Marlon Brando, and plays and shows that remain on Broadway in revivals today—*West Side Story, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof,* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*—were first performed in this period.[13]

During their heyday, the summer theaters brought recent Broadway hits, comedies, and melodramas to new audiences. Between 1930 and 1960, summer stock employed more theater folk than any other venue in America, including Broadway. The Ford Foundation, under the direction of W. MacNeil Lowry, gave generously to the arts, but by the 1960s, the middle classes could travel by air to exotic locations, and attendance at summer stock venues and on Broadway fell. Many small Broadway theaters and summer stock venues could not attract enough revenue and were abandoned. A few regional theaters continue to perform historic dramas; Roanoke Island, North Carolina, Tamiment in the Pocono Mountains, and Green Mansions in the Adirondack Mountains remain in operation today.[14]

Funding has always been a concern for theater productions, and the federal government created assistance in the form of the National Endowment for the Arts, which provided nearly $3 million in grants in 1966 and increased the figure each year until it reached over $162 million in 1995. After a long period of increases, the legislature was motivated by constituent letters over funding for art that offended some sensibilities and took a red pen to the arts budget, reducing funding to $99 million. During the period from 2004 through 2007, the funding remained around $124 million for future years.[15]

American theater frequently experimented with avant-garde productions in the decades between 1920 and 1970, notably in theaters appealing to workers and union members. The Workers' Theater, Workers Drama League (later called the New Playwrights Theater), and the Theater Union put on performances to illustrate the struggles of the working class and promote a political transformation in America. The 1950s and the early 1960s saw little experimentation in the mainstream theater, but the late 1960s into the 1970s were much different. The Open Theater performances attempted to eliminate the invisible barrier between the actors and the audience and meld them together in plays such as *The Mutation Show* by Joseph Chaikin (produced off Broadway) and the Bread and Puppet Theater's *Fire,* which challenged America's position as aggressor in Vietnam. Sitting was not an option at *Fire,* as symbolic masked figures were allowed the freedom to move through the audience in a theater devoid of traditional seats.[16]

There were only 23 regional theaters in the United States in the early 1960s, but by 2007, the number had mushroomed to over 1,800. Many are new structures with state-of-the-art lighting and sound systems. The smaller venues offer new playwrights an opportunity to get produced without the large financial losses a Broadway production could incur. Some famous writers prefer to test a new play in a small venue before opening a Broadway play or touring production. The top five regional theaters year in and year out

in the United States include the Old Globe Theatres in San Diego, California; the South Coast Repertory in Orange County, California; the Goodman Theater in Chicago; the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, Massachusetts; and the Guthrie Theater of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The Guthrie continues to lead all small theaters in the country, with 32,000 season ticket subscribers. Playwrights such as Arthur Miller have premiered works on this stage with the company's seasoned actors. Theater founder Sir Tyrone Guthrie directed the first production, Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet.* The project grew out of a plan that Guthrie made with Oliver Rea and Peter Zeisler to establish a resident acting company and a venue to stage the classics, far away from Broadway's glare and pressure for success. The group did not select Minneapolis; in fact, the city selected the Guthrie planners. A Drama Section appeal in the *New York Times* brought offers from seven cities, but Minneapolis brought more than interest: it brought funding and cooperation with the theater arts program at the University of Minnesota. The T. B. Walker Foundation donated land and a sizable fund to be put toward the theater's construction. With Ford and McKnight Foundation grants providing monies for construction and operation, the Guthrie opened in 1963. The focus of the Guthrie has changed with the appointment of each new artistic director, but over the decades, the theater has been given a Tony Award for outstanding contributions to American theater and is routinely included in lists of America's best regional theaters. It now includes a touring theater group and a lab theater that explores the works of contemporary playwrights.[17]

While regional and local theaters have gained audiences, Broadway fans have seen a decline in offerings since the mid-1960s. Stage productions have been transformed into films on a regular basis since the beginnings of the film industry, but playwrights have also taken films and transformed them into stage shows. The most notable series of successful plays adapted for screen are those of the Marx Brothers. Brothers Harpo, Chico, Groucho, Gummo, and Zeppo clowned their way to Broadway success in nearly a dozen shows. However, only two of the recreated stage plays, *Duck Soup* (1933) and *A Night at the Opera* (1935)—productions not usually noted as high art—are listed by the American Film Institute among the 100 most significant films in movie history.

The Wiz, a restaging of the 1939 classic movie *The Wizard of Oz,* won Tony awards for choreography and costume design in 1975. The stage version of the 1951 film *Sunset Boulevard* received critical acclaim when it was introduced in London and then toured the United States in the 1980s. More recently, modern films that are box office successes without critical acclaim have made their way to Broadway. *Legally Blonde* and *Hairspray* join remakes

The Broadway show *Rent* struck a chord with audiences in the 1990s. Courtesy of Photofest.

of Disney animated features and have drawn a new generation of theatergoers. Popular music from the 1960s is currently featured on Broadway in *Jersey Boys* (chronicling the life of the Four Seasons singing group) and *Dream Girls* (a fictionalized portrayal of Motown's Supremes). *High School Musical,* a popular Disney television movie with a plotline revolving around musical theater, has drawn teen and "tween" wannabes to Broadway in droves. Broadway shows are experiencing longer lives for productions and musicals. *Cats, Chicago, Beauty and the Beast,* and *Phantom of the Opera* are currently in contention for record-breaking runs on Broadway.[18]

Symphonic Music and Opera

The evolution of classical music performance in America has always suffered somewhat from what might be called a frontier mentality. Two and a half centuries ago, if someone in town owned a violin, there could be music for a village dance. However, if the village had to be defended in battle, or if everyone was needed to bring in the harvest, the violin was packed away in its case and stayed there until leisure time returned. American society has always viewed serious music as a luxury, not a necessity. When an economic recession looms in modern times, charitable giving to symphony orchestras

falls off steeply; when school levies fail, the first programs to be cut are music and the other arts—that is, if they had not been discontinued in favor of the study of math or science years before.

What is remarkable is how far the performance of classical music in America has come. Folk music, church music, and any number of singing styles came over with the first immigrants. Parents who could afford instruments and music lessons had their children study the piano or the violin, and music was made in the home—voice and keyboard, soft-toned classical guitars, even a string quartet. Choirs could always be mustered even in small towns, and any talented singer drew an audience; but in times when concerts of orchestral or chamber music were exceedingly rare events, Americans' appreciation of instrumental music was honed by *playing* it, not listening to it.

The nation's first major symphony orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, was formed in 1842. Over a period of many years, a Big Five of symphony orchestras arose, comprising some of the oldest from the biggest cities. The Boston Symphony Orchestra (1885), the Philadelphia Orchestra (1900), the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (1891), and a relative newcomer, the Cleveland Orchestra (1918), joined the New York Philharmonic in an unbreachable clique that persists to the present day. Despite ascents to fame by other fine orchestras—those of St. Louis, Cincinnati, San Francisco, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Minneapolis, and Los Angeles, just to name a few—the Big Five have always paid the highest salaries, received the most lavish financial endowments, attracted the top conductors and best players, made the most recordings, and retained their mystique even during periods of artistic decline. Opera houses also acquired a hierarchy. No American house will ever overtake the fame of the Metropolitan Opera in New York City, even if other superb companies, such as the Chicago Lyric Opera or those of Houston or San Francisco, occasionally mount better productions.[19]

It is no accident that the majority of America's most prestigious musical organizations are east of the Mississippi River: out West, music lovers had to wait longer while cow towns slowly morphed into civilized metropolises. Many millionaire American industrialists lavishly supported their home cities' cultural institutions, not only out of local pride, but also to attract executives and keep them in town. During the nineteenth century, as with theater productions, much of American art music was imported from Europe: famous composers, singers, violinists, pianists, and conductors toured the United States, and some of them stayed. One hundred years ago, when Vienna's master conductor Gustav Mahler rehearsed the New York Philharmonic, he spoke German to the musicians because so many of them were immigrants from Germany and Austria.

Only gradually did American musical education begin to produce musicians competitive with those of Europe, and as of a century ago, no American composer had made a true international reputation. On the other hand, in the early decades of the century, the top opera singers, such as Enrico Caruso, were as fascinating to the masses as rock stars are today. The twentieth century saw a remarkable rise in American musical prestige. Europeans, including conductors Arturo Toscanini and George Szell, tenor Caruso, pianist Arthur Rubinstein, and soprano Maria Callas, continued to dominate the American musical landscape. However, by the 1940s, the music of American composers, such as George Gershwin, Aaron Copland, and Samuel Barber, attracted international attention, African American singers Marian Anderson and Leontyne Price were major stars, and a young man from Boston, Leonard Bernstein, was entering the prime of a career that would outshine that of any other American musician.

Classical music performance in the United States in many ways reached its golden age in the late 1950s, with Bernstein—composer, pianist, educator, and the first American to be given the post of music director of the New York Philharmonic—becoming a popular television idol with his *Omnibus* and *Young People's Concerts.* Bugs Bunny sang Wagner, comic actor Danny Kaye conducted orchestras, and a great many young Americans learned instruments and played in school ensembles. The rise of the musicians' unions gave professional players protection from the long-held tyranny of conductors, and the top American orchestras began to be recognized as the most technically accomplished ensembles in the world.[20]

A gradual decline set in beginning in the 1960s. American composers, many now tenured on university faculties and safe from the whims of audience tastes, began writing cerebral music that left the public behind. Recordings, which had been beneficial in spreading classical music to the masses, also lessened the motivation for people to learn to play instruments themselves or to attend public performances. As the century waned, the nation's tastes changed. Televised sports dominated weekends, and attention spans grew shorter as TV shows, with commercial breaks every few minutes, took firm hold of the public. Classical music, long perceived as a pleasure mainly for the elite and educated, began to fall victim to the traditional American suspicion of anything highbrow. Rock 'n' roll, R&B, and country music, exploding in popularity, required no background musical knowledge to enjoy. As the world economy shifted, major American corporations were acquired by overseas concerns, and their sense of obligation to local American cultural institutions vanished. Rich families shifted their attention to the humanities, rather than the arts, and individual charitable giving faded as the baby boomer generation came to power.

Citing a lack of innovative and imaginative composers focusing on their audience, but instead writing with an eye toward the history of music and theory, one South African music scholar has suggested that classical music died as early as 1950, after making a slow decline from 1939: music scholars, university-trained theorists, and intellectuals made up more and more of the concert audience, and the public less and less.[21]

After 1970, most school systems cut their string orchestra programs entirely, and the remaining wind and brass students were busier with marching band than with concerts. Fewer and fewer youth wanted to learn the clarinet or trombone since playing guitar in a garage band was undeniably cooler. Many American classical music institutions, saddled with huge fixed costs and accustomed to being bailed out by deep-pocketed donors, began to languish in an era when even a nonprofit entity must pay its own way or vanish. The Tulsa (Oklahoma) Philharmonic, one example out of many orchestras that have suffered, faced a million-dollar deficit and was forced to cancel the remaining concerts in its 2002–2003 season.[22]

Classical radio stations changed format to sports, light rock, or talk. Most symphony orchestras felt they had to play more pops concerts to stay afloat, in the process further dumbing down the public taste, just as Broadway was reduced to adapting more popular movies and cartoons for stage productions. Most record companies had ceased to record classical music by the end of the twentieth century, with classical releases today averaging only about 100 new discs a year, compared to nearly 700 in the 1980s. A top classical artist such as cellist Yo-Yo Ma is far better known for a crossover CD with pop star James Taylor than for his recording of the Bach suites. The Three Tenors, Placido Domingo, Jose Carreras, and Luciano Pavarotti, helped accelerate these trends during their 1990 concert tour: operatic high points for which audiences used to happily wait an hour or more were now strung together in machine-gun fashion.[23]

Classical music exists in today's mainstream media only as endlessly repeated excerpts of four or five tired favorites, grotesquely compressed into background music for TV commercials. In the wake of September 11, 2001, American philanthropy in the performing arts dropped off grievously, while the painstakingly built endowment funds of opera companies and symphony orchestras dropped precipitously with the stock market. The marketing of many classical soloists and singers now depends more on their physical and photogenic appeal than their musical artistry. The high costs of tickets are another barrier to popularity: theater managers maintain that the price of a ticket covers less than half the cost of the production today. Ticket prices for the New York Philharmonic in 2007 rivaled those of top-rated rock acts, and most orchestras perform today with only 60–65 percent of audience seats filled.

Savvy symphony promoters realized, with the success of Little Einstein and tops of the charts classical music CDs for children, that if their organizations were to survive, they must hook parents on the idea that classical music provides children a head start on skills necessary for college and success in life. The Internet assisted in this project. The San Francisco Symphony and the Boston Symphony Orchestra developed kids' sites offering interactive games, images, music feeds, and downloads, but kids are not the only group who require education in the classical literature. Most orchestras now provide adult educational concerts and concert previews to educate the audience about how to appreciate the musical works and biographical background of the composer. For listeners who do not care to dress for a performance in formal wear or even long pants, many orchestras now offer casual dress concerts. Most symphonies now program with a hook, such as a meet-and-greet singles event. Orchestras have seen increases in attendance when a tie-in to television or popular culture is used, such as voting off a section of the orchestra or playing movie music while screening silent films. Opera companies have found some success in projecting supertitles (translations of opera texts) on a small screen above the stage. The Met reached some new audiences in 2006 with live closed-circuit high-definition television broadcasts (shown across the country in movie theaters) of Mozart's *The Magic Flute,* staged by the producer of *The Lion King,* with the music severely shortened to cater to modern attention spans.

Despite all efforts, classical music, never attractive to a major percentage of the public and now scantily funded, hovers on the edge of irrelevancy, while TV reality shows, NASCAR, *American Idol,* and ultimate fighting define the pop culture trend in American tastes. If the complete disappearance of classical music in America seems unlikely, so does a significant comeback.

Dance

American dance did not break away from the European influence until the introduction of modern dance in the early 1920s. Dance became a hot topic in America and garnered major press coverage when the first belly dance was performed at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. Early dance performances catered to specific ethnic groups, featuring wooden shoes or clogs. Clog dancers were frequently used as comic relief in variety shows and performed the clown dances. Modern clowning, or *krumping,* shares similar moves with break dancing. Military clogging and clog dances were often part of local variety shows, and a novel form of the dance became popular with the minstrel and vaudeville shows. Clog shoes and acrobatics were featured in a bizarre performance that required the dancer to do steps atop

a pedestal. The smaller the tap area, the larger the audience the performer would draw.

American classical dance performances relied heavily on European ballet, and until choreographer Vaslav Nijinsky and composer Igor Stravinsky premiered *Le Sacre du Printemps (The Rite of Spring)* in Paris in 1913, all ballet followed strict conventions for performances. *The Rite* flew in the face of the classical traditions of both music and dance, and police were called to restore order in the audience after fighting broke out between supporters and detractors of the new forms. Russian promoter Sergei Diaghilev was quite pleased with the open controversy. American ballets were inspired by this creative impulse in ballet and began to interpret dance in their unique way. Portions of *The Rite of Spring* today remain standard repertory for many professional companies.[24]

America developed a rich ballet and modern dance tradition. American dancer Isadora Duncan inspired modern dance with her so-called free dance performance in 1899. Her light, free-form costumes, bare feet, and long, flowing hair shocked the dance and theater world in United States, but audiences in Paris loved her. Duncan returned to the United States with dancers Loie Fuller and Ruth St. Denis to set the stage for a transformation of the way in which dance was perceived. Formal dance, hard-toed shoes, and strict interpretation gave way to open, interpretative dance performed in flowing costumes. Duncan was killed in a freak car incident when her scarf became tangled in the wheel of her sports car in 1927 at the age of 49, but Ruth St. Denis and her husband, dancer Ted Shawn, carried on the modern dance tradition in their school that opened in 1914. This group of dancers, including Duncan, Shawn, and St. Denis, are now called the first generation of American modern dancers.

Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, Martha Graham, and Edna Guy, students at the Denishawn School, became the second generation. Martha Graham danced at Denishawn until 1923, when she became a principal soloist in the *Greenwich Village Follies* three years later. Graham continued choreographing and started her own modern dance company, overseeing it until her death in 1991. The company carries on her vision today in performances around the world.[25]

Ted Shawn was instrumental in developing the role of the male dancer beyond partnering the female in lifts and turns. Ted Shawn and his Men Dancers gave their first performance in Boston in 1933 and changed the world of dance. Shawn revolutionized dance performance, both in his methods and in the promotion of the art form. His students would become the future leaders of dance in America. Merce Cunningham, Alvin Ailey, Robert Joffrey, Agnes de Mille, and Pearl Lang all benefited from his instruction,

mentoring, and promotion. Shawn's festival Jacob's Pillow, established in 1932 as a home for American dance and a center for his company, is America's longest continuously running dance festival. It offers dance workshops, professional performances, and training, with over 80,000 visitors attending classes and performances each summer. Shawn died in 1972 at the age of 81, but Jacob's Pillow, named for the farm in the Berkshires in western Massachusetts where the festival is held, continues to share "Papa's" spirit of the dance.[26]

Since the organization of the Ballet Negre, founded by Katherine Dunham in 1930, detractors of African American dancers as professionals claimed that they were not suited to perform classical ballet owing to differences in the European and African body styles. African American dancers were required to overcome both racial and artistic discrimination. Edna Guy and Hemsley Winfield danced *First Negro Dance Recital in America* in 1931, and by 1937, Eugene Von Grona created the American Negro Ballet with dancer James Weldon Johnson, garnering favorable reviews from major white news sources. The Negro Dance Company, created by Felicia Sorel and Wilson Williams, danced the choreography of Ann Sokolow, a dancer trained by Martha Graham. African American dancer Katherine Dunham, appointed the director of ballet for the Federal Theatre Project in 1938, performed in *Tropics and Le Jazz Hot* in New York in 1940, which established her as a sought-after star. That same year, her dance troupe joined the Broadway musical *Cabin in the Sky,* an all–African American production. Despite the discrimination the group faced, white audiences regularly attended performances. The creation of the Dance Theater of Harlem, under the direction of dancers Arthur Mitchell (a principal dancer in the New York City Ballet) and Karel Shook (Mitchell's dance teacher), took the debate head-on in 1969 by creating a ballet school. The company first met in the basement of a Harlem church and now is known throughout the world for its efforts in educational programming and dance performance. Today, contemporary dance companies routinely feature African American dancers such as Carmen de Lavallade, Dudley Williams, and Gus Solomon, and African Americans direct important dance troupes, including Judith Jamison, who has taken over the position of artist director of the American Dance Theater from the late Alvin Ailey.[27]

The 1960s and 1970s saw a boom in dance, reflected in the number of dance schools and new companies founded. The story of the Ohio Ballet (OB) is a textbook illustration of the highs and lows of a dance company. OB was founded in 1968 by artistic director Heinz Poll and associate director Thomas R. Skelton (also an award-winning lighting designer). The company toured the United States, South America, and Europe to good reviews. Union dancers were paid for 36 weeks per year, but by the late 1980s, pay cuts were necessary. Beginning in 1975, the company established a tradition

of putting on a six-week summer program of free shows on outdoor stages in northeast Ohio. OB's National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) funding was reduced in the 1980s, and revenues for its more cutting-edge repertory were not as high as those of ballet companies performing classical story works such as *Swan Lake.* With Skelton's death in 1994 and Poll's retirement in 1999, the company took stock. Reorganization efforts resulted in a permanent home (and a 15-year contract) at the University of Akron in 2003, with the state of Ohio and a group of foundations offering funding for the new Center for Dance and Music. The plan was for the company to work with the university in creating a higher profile for fine arts on the campus. OB also performed in residence at the Cleveland Playhouse Square Center, but financial difficulties and lack of attendance at their performances forced the company to incorporate with the Cleveland Ballet.[28]

Cleveland and San Jose appear unlikely partners for a ballet company, but because of funding difficulties, the two companies attempted to work together, giving the first position in the ballet's title to the city where they were performing. Office staff was in place in both cities, and the dancers lived and trained in Cleveland but performed in both places. A formal announcement ended the company's 25th season and split the partnership. Half of the dancers joined the reconfigured company, Ballet San Jose Silicon Valley (popularly known as Ballet San Jose), and the other group of dancers joined small companies in the Cleveland area. Performances for the San Jose company today include *The Nutcracker, Carmina Burana, Swan Lake,* several Balanchine ballets, and Stravinsky's *The Firebird.*

While Cleveland topped the list in 2005 and 2007 of major U.S. cities with the highest percentage of the population living in poverty, sponsors for the new Ballet San Jose are plentiful and include Fry's Electronics, SanDisk, eBay Foundation, Linear Technology, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (part of the Hewlett and Packard partnership), proving that location is an important component for a dance company. Dancers from four regional ballets with rights to perform Poll's choreography today, along with a group of dancers who studied with Poll, continue the tradition of putting on free summer performances in Akron public parks, but the formal dance company no longer performs. The series is called the Heinz Poll Summer Dance Festival, in honor of the artistic director and founder of the Ohio Ballet.[29]

Like symphony performances or operas, classical dance is not a big moneymaker. Traditionally, performances in the arts have been dependent on a patron, and ballet has followed that pattern to modern times. A handful of national companies, usually banking and financial institutions with local branches, sponsor many regional or large local dance companies. Many other countries provide backing for national dance companies, but that has never

been the case in the United States. Some states offer competitive grant funding for the arts, and many ballets use these renewable funds for operating expenses. Most funds have strings that require companies to do outreach concerts to rural areas. Federal funds are available in the form of specialized grants, many from the NEA. Congressional support (in terms of the amount of money budgeted for the NEA) periodically wavers, and some decades have found high-priority public issues pressuring elected representatives to reduce cutting-edge performance funding. Strings currently attached to federal grants almost uniformly require the recipients to offer low-cost or free performances for the public and at elementary, middle, and high schools. Grant applications must outline a regional need and a unique proposal to address that need.

During the years when NEA and state funding is tight, avant-garde and controversial projects are rarely funded. This forces many companies to go for attendance money and perform only holiday and story ballets, further widening the gap in dance education and creating situations in which audiences come to stereotype ballet as "women as swans." Large dance companies have a grant writer on staff who works year-round to obtain funding. Smaller companies have staff members that take on the grant writing duties in between their own assignments or ask community members to volunteer for the task, with mixed results. A professional grant writer usually has an advantage over volunteer efforts. Success attracts the successful, and the companies with international reputations attract the largest amount of capital. Even with ongoing funding difficulties, a number of American dance companies have international reputations.

Tap Dancing

Dance had a revival in the 1960s and 1970s, and interest in tap dancing also increased. Tap is one of the pure American cultural innovations, and a long line of dancers have developed the art. European clog and jigs, mixed with African immigrant rhythms and improvisations, form the basic elements of tap. Early saloon dancers Uncle Jim Lowe and William Henry "Juba" Lane were documented step dancers who toured the country before the Civil War, often appearing in racially integrated shows. Lane traveled to London to perform and challenged noted Irish step dancer Jack Diamond to a dance-off. Although a clear winner was never established, Lane billed himself as the "King of Dance." Whites adopted tap dancing, notably Thomas Dartmouth "Daddy" Rice, who tapped in his productions in 1828. Rice, a minstrelsy performer, used blackface to portray the stereotypes of the dandy and the clown. Black dancer William Henry "Juba" Lane gained fame with his dancing in 1840. Several schools of tap developed, with one group using wooden shoes

(sometimes called "buck and wing" style) and the other a smooth-sole shoe style, where the dancer would shuffle, rather than loudly pound, the shoe on the stage. These two styles integrated by the 1920s to utilize a smooth shoe with metal plates affixed to the toe and heel.

The Floradora Sextet, turn-of-the-century female dancers, tapped out a synchronized routine that the Ziegfeld Follies chorus line adapted into a regular performance feature. Eubie Blake and Noble Sissle created a show called *Shuffle Along* that played on Broadway in 1921, creating national interest in tap. Personal innovation in tap led to a group of dancers called Nerve Tappers, who would tap as many beats with the foot as a loose ankle would allow. All vaudeville performers from the 1920s onward were expected to perform some form of tap as well as the black bottom and the Charleston, made popular in Broadway shows.[30]

Two levels of touring tap performers developed: flash and class acts. The flash acts included attention-getting tap steps and acrobatic moves to awe audiences, while the class acts frequently used a story line that focused on their smooth steps and graceful movements. Honi Coles and Cholly Atkins were a noted class acts duo, and Bill "Bojangles" Robinson would later join child star Shirley Temple to popularize the class act for movie audiences. Children growing up in the 1930s frequently took tap lessons to tap just like Miss Temple. Some groups developed a style that allowed them to play both the flash and class venues. The Nicholas and Condos brothers are the best-known duos of this type.

The 1930s and 1940s saw Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, and Ray Bolger bring tap to the movies, and both tap and popular dance schools sprang up across America to teach adults the buck and wing and shuffles. Residents in large cities and small towns alike wanted to learn to dance. Americans in the Midwest attended weekly lessons in a studio, while many city dwellers tapped informally on street corners. Top tap acts routinely borrowed and adapted steps from street tappers. Actors and hoofers Buddy Ebsen and Gene Kelly carried on the tap legacy into the 1950s on the big screen and Broadway. In the 1970s and 1980s, tapping was again the rage with Broadway hits such as *On the Twentieth Century* and a remake of the 1920 stage hit *The Girlfriend.* Tommy Tune choreographed tap dances for a new group of Broadway hits and families of tappers, such as Gregory and Maurice Hines, who followed in the steps of the brothers Harold and Fayard Nicholas and the Covan Brothers.[31]

Actors from earliest times were trained in dancing and singing, in addition to acting. Although not popularly known for their dance prowess, actors James Dean and Marlon Brando were students at the Dunham School of Dance in New York City. Dramatic actor Christopher Walken, known for his

Gregory Hines, right, danced his way into fame through the 1970s and 1980s with movies such as *History of the World: Part I* and Broadway shows such as *Jelly's Last Jam.* Courtesy of Photofest.

roles in films such as *The Deer Hunter* and *Pulp Fiction,* is a trained tap dancer who starred both in Broadway and on film in the musical hit *Chicago.*

Popular Music

Popular music performance, once centered on the parlor piano and family entertainment at the community school auditorium, underwent a metamorphosis with the invention of the radio. Radio featured professional performers and moved music from a personal event to a regional, national, and even international experience. With the invention of the television, listeners no longer had to imagine the appearance of the performer. Sound and music records, made at 78 rpm and 45 rpm, and then long-play records of 33 1/3 rpm, were popular for decades (along with tape cassettes from the 1960s onward), but these were swept away by CDs in the 1980s. Music videos, which exploded on the scene in the 1980s on MTV, had an indelible effect on the public's perception of musicians. After 2000, the Internet moved popular music into the future, offering downloading capabilities in both sound and the capture of visual images. Despite the availability of entertainers on the

Internet, live concerts remain popular in the United States. Rock concerts are the most popular and bring in the highest revenues.

The legacy of culture-changing rock performances began with Elvis Presley and the first American tour of the British band the Beatles, but bands touring the United States had their origin in the early jazz orchestras that traveled from city to city during the period 1914–1919. Restrictions were placed on African American musicians near New Orleans that made it difficult for them to obtain work permits, so many left the area and began touring. The original Creole Orchestra is a typical example. Organized in Los Angeles by Bill Johnson in 1909, the group of displaced New Orleans jazzers, including Freddie Keppard, James Palao, and George Baquet, toured from 1914 through 1918 (ignoring requests to make recordings of their music). Their dance music was not well received due to the basic difference in audiences: northern audiences expected to listen to the music, but New Orleans audiences expected to dance to it. The music became known as ratty because of the improvisational style used when the five-instrument band played. The Creole Orchestra dissolved in 1918, but this period established a touring tradition that future rock bands would emulate to earn a living.[32]

Musical tours prior to the 1950s usually included dancing by audience members. Religious, classical, and country performers developed circuits that they would tour each year, but the guitar-playing vocalist Elvis Presley would change this pattern. Presley performed live in Shreveport, Louisiana, on the *Louisiana Hayride* radio program (a competitor to the Grand Ole Opry) and was an instant hit. He signed a contract committing him to a weekly show for one year, and it was during this work that he met and signed with promoter Colonel Tom Parker, manager to stars Eddy Arnold and Hank Snow. From this partnership, Presley was able to cross over from country music to the new rock 'n' roll, a musical format that had similarities to early jazz in that it encouraged dancing. Elvis recorded, made movies, and toured, garnering top rankings on the hit parade and in performance tours until the early 1960s and the introduction of English groups to the American musical market. He continued to perform developing into a Las Vegas headliner for showrooms until his death on August 16, 1977.[33]

The British Invasion of the 1960s brought the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Animals, Herman's Hermits, the Zombies, and the Kinks. The Beatles, one of the first groups to write all their own songs, were also the first to play at large venues once reserved only for sporting events. Shea Stadium hosted the Beatles and nearly 60,000 screaming fans on August 15, 1965. The concert was so successful that the stadium agreed to host many more rock concerts, including the Police, Elton John, and a 1970 Summer Festival for Peace with Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin.[34]

Large-scale rock outdoor music concerts were pioneered in the 1960s, and the largest was in New York State. The Woodstock Music and Art Festival holds a unique place in the history of popular music. The first event took place from August 15 to 17, 1969, on land rented from farmer Max Yasgur near the towns of Bethel, Woodstock, and Wallkill. The young concert promoters, Michael Lang, Artie Kornfeld, Joel Rosenman, and John Roberts, planned for attendance of nearly 200,000, but by the time the event concluded, estimates put the weekend crowd in excess of 400,000. Fans trampled fences and declared Woodstock a free event, denying concert promoters any profits and opening the organizers to a host of lawsuits from vendors and local residents for damages. Word of mouth and radio disc jockeys hyped the event, and crowds swelled, blocking the roadways into and out of the grounds.

Singer-songwriter Richie Havens played for hours before any of the other performers were able to reach the stage. His song "Freedom," entirely improvised while on stage, is remembered as an anthem of the festival. The rock group the Who played a 24-song set. The Grateful Dead; Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young; Santana; Jefferson Airplane; Janis Joplin; and a host of others,

A Woodstock '99 concertgoer hammers a pay phone off of a burned out Bell Atlantic phone truck. Rioting broke out after the three-day festival ended. © AP Photo/ Stephen Chernin.

some arriving by helicopter to reach the stage, played to crowds left for an entire summer weekend without food, shelter from the rains, and sanitation. Woodstock was a failure for its promoters, but it created music history, immortalized in a record and film that carried the music to millions. An attempt at a Woodstock revival in 1994 was peaceful but failed to capture the spirit of the first concert. Woodstock '99, promoted again by Michael Lang, ended with a riot by several hundred fans, who torched vendor trailers, claiming they were angered by prices of $4 for a bottle of water.[35]

Rock groups gave titles to their tours in the 1970s, many named for recently released albums. Large arena rock tours in the 1980s began the evolution of concert themes. David Bowie performed as Ziggy Stardust with the Spiders from Mars, and rock group KISS and Alice Cooper morphed into ghoulish figures with costumes and full-face makeup. Ozzy Osbourne bit off a bat's head in one performance and used this as a theme for later tours, biting heads from plastic bats in each city the tour played.

Performers today make more from touring than from music sales, and some groups tour year-round to earn income and keep tour crews working. The Grateful Dead was formed in the San Francisco Bay area in 1965, while the members lived at 710 Ashbury Street. The group and the Haight-Ashbury district became part of a music scene that would make both famous. The international media in 1967 drew national attention to what is now called the "Summer of Love," and hippies from the world came to San Francisco to hear live music, wearing flowers in their hair as gestures of peace in the time of the Vietnam War. The Grateful Dead, along with other oddly named musical groups called Jefferson Airplane, Quicksilver Messenger Service, and Moby Grape, gave free concerts in parks. The Dead added to their legend in performances with author Ken Kesey.

The group continued to tour regularly for decades and became legendary for shows featuring space music, incorporating hours of improvised music solos fans called *The X-Factor.* Illegally recorded bootleg albums and tapes, encouraged by the group, were feverishly traded among diehard fans, angering record executives, who felt the practice denied profits to the record company. The Grateful Dead performed 85 concerts in one year, even though the group failed to have a hit song on the charts or to be included in a regular rotation on any syndicated radio programming. Even after the death of group leader Jerry Garcia in 1995 at the age of 53, the remaining members, known simply as The Dead, were still a top act on the college music circuit. Group members sold merchandising rights to T-shirts, bumper stickers, and hats to build their personal fortunes.[36]

The top touring acts in the country in 2007 included rock music groups that have been in the industry for decades, including Pearl Jam, Rush, the

Rolling Stones, Genesis, Guns N' Roses, Bob Dylan, Bon Jovi, the Who, and Aerosmith as well as the Police, returning after a 23-year hiatus. Industry insiders speculate that the revival tours earn top dollar because of the age of the audience, many of whom have established careers with a large amount of disposable income. Fans spent an average of $130 to be serenaded by former Beatle Paul McCartney on his tour in 2002, while new acts such as Nickelback set concertgoers back less than $30. Rumors claimed that ticket scalpers received over $3,000 for front row seats to Sir Paul.[37]

Outdoor amphitheaters were the top live music rock concert draws in the 1980s, but today, many have closed. Arena concert venues allow larger crowds, and now that groups and record labels market their own T-shirts and posters, there is less profit to be made in owning a venue that features a large amount of land. The dramatic increase in land values, especially in states with moderate climates, has made home building far more lucrative.

Hip hop and rap music performances began to develop in large metropolitan areas such as New York City and Los Angeles in the 1970s. Local performers developed styles that integrated regional characteristics and combined with exotic influences that included Jamaican "toasting." Toasts were done by disc jockeys playing records (usually American R&B) at live dances to encourage the dancers. Toasting evolved to encompass a practice known as "dubbing," where the DJ would select short phrases (samples) from the record. Samples would be manipulated using the turntable to create individual styles. Competitions, or "battles," took place between competing DJs. These performance styles came to the United States in the mid-1960s and were integrated into musical forms called "rapping" and "hip hop" that began to grow to popularity in the 1970s. Dance forms, such as locking, popping, clowning, and flow, were an integral part of live performances and audience participation, and each performer developed a style and a fan following. Some noted live performance DJs were: Theodor, inventor of "scratching," a process that influences the speed of the record; Grandmaster Flash (George Saddler) who developed "punch phasing" (adding percussion from one record to highlight the beat of the main recording); and The Fat Boys, a group that perfected using human sounds to create percussion (a "Human Beat Box"). Afrika Bombaataa and the Zulu Nation were an early hip hop act that focused on dance and music, rather than on the gang aspect of performance music. Regional Zulu Nation clubs were established around the country.

Early rap music was associated with gang activity and, as the music style became more mainstream, rappers began touring the United States. Violence broke out at some concert venues and communities passed laws banning rap performances. There is debate as to whether rap and hip hop appealed to

white and black audiences alike at first, but record companies and concert promoters began to target white audiences. The three-member rap group Run D.M.C. sold out concert venues across the country in the 1980s. Females, targets of abuse in early rap records and live stage performances, began earning top honors for rap music in groups such as Salt 'N' Pepa. By the mid-1980s, hip hop evolved into more than just music and dance: the hip hop culture included dress, hairstyles, and a unique slang vocabulary. By the 1990s, spontaneously arranged dance parties called "raves" featured all types of music but featured hip hop performers.

Latin, Salsa, Tex-Mex, and Tejano music are now also a major component of American performance culture. Latin influences were first found in the folk music performed in the southwestern United States from the earliest U.S. history, and popular music in the United States has been influenced by Latin culture since before the turn of the nineteenth century. Couples danced the rumba and tango to orchestra music of the 1920s and dancers added the mambo and conga line to the popular dances in the 1940s and 1950s. Once confined to areas of the country with large Latin populations, performers such as Gloria Estefan's Miami Sound Machine and Carlos Santana brought Latin influences to the pop charts in the 1970s. Jennifer Lopez, Ricky Martin, Christina Aguilera, and Tex-Mex singer Selena attracted sellout audiences to performances in the 1990s. Latin music today is considered to be a mainstream musical offering.

Regional Performances

French observer Alexis de Tocqueville noted the regional differences of the American landscape and culture when he toured the country in 1831, and those unique characteristics remain at the heart of American performance today. Each region offers unique performance opportunities and has developed a culture of music theater and dance performances.

The North

British tastes established the criteria for performance for the first colonies that would later become the United States. As the colonists constructed theaters, they became aware of the differences between French and British performances versus American offerings. The symphony orchestras in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia first set the bar for American classical music, and the public still looks to these cities to uphold the standards of performance. Theater productions may rehearse and offer trial runs in other parts of the country, but the ultimate objective is to fill theaters on

Broadway. Other important performance traditions have developed in the American North.

Upstate New York is the home of the Chautauqua Institution. The Chautauqua movement grew out of a public desire to experience the performances written about in magazines and newspapers that were held at the Chautauqua Institution at the lake in southwestern New York State. The summer sessions originated in 1874 with Lewis Miller of Ohio and John Heyl Vincent of New Jersey as a Sunday school camp and quickly expanded into performances and instruction that included art, music, and physical education courses for teachers. The program grew with the creation of the Chautauqua Literary Scientific Circle, which encouraged reading and, beginning in 1878, gave rise to tens of thousands of reading circles through the country.

Lectures were well established by 1880 and featured speakers on a wide range of topics, including politics, literature, philosophy, and international relations. Educator John Dewey directed the preschool classes at the institution, and both the Boys' and Girls' Clubs had constructed buildings on the grounds by 1902. Melvil Dewey began training librarians in 1900. The Chautauqua Institution for Lifelong Study was officially chartered in 1902. Ironically, the country's least capable president, Ulysses S. Grant, was the first U.S. president to attend classes and lectures at the institution, putting the camp on the wealthy class's list of *the* place to be in the summer. Among the most popular speakers were women's rights advocate Susan B. Anthony, aviatrix Amelia Earhart, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, composer and conductor John Philip Sousa, and (decades later) Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

Magazine reading was a popular pastime at the turn of the century, and residents of rural towns and villages across the country wished to expand their knowledge, but they were unable to travel to the institution or were shut out by competition for tickets to the choice performances each summer. The traveling Chautauqua experience was created to bring the institution to these families. At the height of the movement, 21 troupes traveled 93 circuits throughout the United States, performing for and teaching more than 35 million people each year. A typical night at a tent performance in the Midwest might include speeches by a Populist Party member explaining the difference between the silver and gold economic platforms, a union leader from the Knights of Labor listing reasons why labor unions should be legal in all industries, musical performances of hymns or a selection from an opera, and a dramatic interpretation of a piece of classical literature or scripture reading from the Bible. The Chautauqua's aim was education, but the crowds clearly viewed the performances as entertainment.

For a time traveler from today, the Chautauqua circuit would have resembled a live presentation of the History Channel, mixed liberally with a large

dose of the Public Broadcasting Service. Something at the two- or three-day program was bound to capture the interest of every member of the family. A full music program was offered at the New York summer camp, beginning in 1929, with the establishment of the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra. The group continues to perform each summer at the 5,000-seat Victorian-style outdoor stage. An opera and ballet company and a conservatory theater were added to perform in halls built on the grounds for their exclusive use. Despite financial ups and downs, including a bankruptcy in 1933, the institution continues to put on a full summer session, attracting an average of 150,000 people to the picturesque village on the lake each year.[38]

The Tanglewood Festival, located in the Berkshire Mountains of western Massachusetts, is the summer musical venue for the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO; and its offshoot, the Boston Pops) as well as a group of select music students. The place that earlier inspired Nathaniel Hawthorne's children's stories *The Tanglewood Tales* has hosted the BSO since 1937. After a disastrous inaugural performance, during which the audience, musicians, and instruments were soaked in a summer rainstorm, a pavilion designed by Finnish architect Eero Saarinen was constructed. In the 1950s, Tanglewood banned women in shorts from sitting in the pavilion, claiming that uncovered legs were indecent. Bare-legged female visitors were forced to rent skirts at the festival entrance or sit on the lawn to listen to the performance. Bowing to recent public pressure to incorporate a visual element, Tanglewood has added a film night. On these special nights, the conductor and orchestra play original film scores, while movies are projected on a screen above the stage. Over 5,000 music fans today can be seated under the open-air shed, women in shorts are now allowed admission to any seat they wish, and an additional 10,000 music fans can picnic and take in the performance under the stars. Since 1990, Tanglewood on Parade has become a tradition that includes a finale with Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* and concludes with a fireworks display. Tickets to the event are always sold out, and television stations broadcast the performance across the country.[39]

The Newport Music Festival began in Rhode Island in 1969 as a summer performance location for New York's Metropolitan Opera. The location turned out to be unsuitable for opera, but the festival has continued with a series of more than 60 chamber music performances over 17 days each July, many of which use members of the Met Opera Orchestra. Among the festival's notable performances have been recitals by award-winning violinist Andrei Gavrilov and pianist Bella Davidovich. The Newport Jazz Festival (also in Rhode Island) began in 1954. This August, outdoor, exclusively jazz festival is considered the first of its kind in the world; most of the world's great jazz artists have passed through Newport during the summers. Singer

Dave Brubeck performs during the Newport JVC Jazz Festival in Rhode Island. © AP Photo/Joe Giblin.

Mahalia Jackson brought gospel to a new audience after performing at the venue in 1958. The festival closed down in 1971 but was revived again in 1981 by the original founders, jazz club impresario George Wein and financial backers Louis and Elaine Lorillard. The current management team, JVC Family of Jazz Festivals, now produces 117 jazz festivals across the United States and claims attendance of over 40,000 musicians and live audiences of nearly 4 million people since the group took over production in 1990. Dave Brubeck, Etta James, Dizzy Gillespie, Jack DeJohnette, and Branford Marsalis are but a few of the top musicians who have headlined at this granddaddy of jazz festivals.[40]

The Midwest

At the close of World War I, African American musicians toured or relocated from the South to midwestern and northern cities in search of work. New Orleans bassist and bandleader Bill Johnson settled in Chicago after touring failed to bring in the profits he had hoped for. He invited his friend Joe Oliver to join him since Chicago's economy was booming and music venues were opening around the city. Jazz was still a tough sell for most audiences until 1917, when jazz recordings began to educate audiences on

the improvisational nature of the music. Mississippi riverboats began to hire jazz musicians to play for dance party excursions, and the jazz age was born. Rooftop dining and dancing became the rage, and Chicago became the place to be for jazz in the 1920s.

When the Storyville brothels and clubs were closed during this period, additional musicians went looking for work in music in the Windy City. Joe Oliver headed his King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band, with a young newcomer named Louis Armstrong on trumpet. Despite societal discrimination, white patrons hired African American orchestras to play for events. The 1930s saw jazz bands expand from five pieces to larger numbers. The orchestras also featured soloists. Duke Ellington, Paul Whiteman, and Fletcher Henderson headlined the top jazz clubs and hotel ballrooms in Chicago and around the country. Bluesmen from the South also came to Chicago. Little Walter, Sonny Boy Williams II, and Big Walter Horton were regulars on the local club circuit.

Blues and jazz went through a series of changes, splintering into diverse styles, and by the 1960s, Thelonius Monk and Miles Davis rose to be the top jazzers. Chicago Blues developed its own identifiable style, featuring a small string band with amplified instruments, percussion from a piano or drums, and a harmonica; some groups added a saxophone to the mix. Chicago blues usually has a single person on vocals. Important Chicago bluesmen Willie Dixon, Carey Bell, and Freddie King became known throughout the world for their individualistic styles. Jazz and blues clubs can still be found throughout Chicago today, and fans claim that districts specialize, with separate venues for bebop, big band, swing, fusion, experimental, delta, jump, and Chicago styles.[41]

The South

The Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee, is the capital of country and bluegrass music. The first performance hall, built by the National Life and Accident Insurance Company, was home to live stage shows featuring banjo pickers and fiddle players, singers, and comedians who were broadcast to radio stations across the country under the call letters WSM (We Shield Millions). The Opry changed homes many times to allow for increasing audiences, and Hank Williams, Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, Flat and Scruggs, Patsy Cline, Dolly Parton, Porter Wagoner, and the Sons of the Pioneers appeared at the various early venues. Early Opry acts performed for the weekend broadcasts and toured the country in tent shows and auditoriums across the country during the week. The Opry continues to tour, but not at the frenetic pace of its pioneers.

Performances at the Opry today can be heard on a two-hour weekend radio program broadcast to over 200 markets as well as on satellite radio, the

The Grand Ole Opry is the longest continuously running radio show in the world. © AP Photo/Mark Humphrey.

Internet, and the Armed Forces Network. Performers have been featured on television since 1955 and are now seen on the Great American Country cable channel. The solid oak center stage of the Ryan Auditorium, which has housed the Opry since 1943, was moved to a new Opry house in 1974 and continues to host fans to live music performances each year, with broadcasts on both radio and television. Ambassadors, members of the Academy of Country Music with sponsorship of the Opry, have toured since the 1930s, bringing country, western, and bluegrass music to the world.[42]

The city of New Orleans is a street performer's dream. Tap dancers, singers, horn players, and bucket drummers occupy city street corners each day and into the night. Carnivals are cultural events in the Big Easy. The influences of French costume balls and parades, masked Caribbean carnivals, and African music rhythms and melodic curves are evident each year at the Mardi Gras celebrations. Named for Mardi Gras Day in 1699, when a camp at Point du Mardi Gras was constructed near the present-day city, the first documented parade took place in 1837, but most historians cite 1857 as the inaugural Mardi Gras—the first with a parade and ball organized with

a unifying theme. The Mystic Krewe of Comus, Merrie Monarchs of Mirth carried torches to light the parade path in an organized and nonviolent parade. The entire city, however, joined the revelry in 1872 and expanded the party with the selection of the king, an official flag, and an anthem adapted from a popular burlesque show. Burlesque sensation Lydia Thompson was, in fact, a guest for the parade. Mardi Gras began as a religious celebration and has expanded over the decades to include multiple types of performance art. Rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina has been slow, but the residents stood together and offered small parades and celebrations only a few months after the devastating storm. Attendance at Mardi Gras increases each year, as additional hotels and restaurants open in the city.[43]

New Orleans's Preservation Hall in the heart of the French Quarter draws crowds from around the world to hear jazz musicians play. The hall is old and surprisingly small. The audience sits on worn wooden chairs and benches, while the band plays the improvised jazz that music historians claim as an American innovation. Thousands visit the hall, and the associated jazz festival held each year in April attracted a crowd of over 600,000 in 2001.[44]

Grassroots music festivals such as the Southwest Louisiana Zydeco Music Festival have been organized in an attempt to maintain the history of a specific musical genre or performance style. Fearful of the disappearance of the Creole tradition of the La La (house dance), where homemade gumbo and a *bouchere* (hog roast) are enjoyed, a group of Louisiana residents formed the Treasure of Opelousas and organized a festival in 1982 to celebrate Creole and zydeco music and customs. Groups performing at this venue regularly use *frottiers* (washboards), spoons, and a fiddle to play dance music. The festival puts on a month of events that include an old-fashioned ball, where the king and queen of zydeco are crowned; a jam session; a breakfast; and dances, culminating in a one-day musical extravaganza near the first of September each year in Plaisance, Louisiana.[45]

The Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival, begun in 2002, is held each June in Manchester, Tennessee (60 miles south of Nashville) on a 700-acre farm. It became the world's most profitable music festival in 2007. The event features performances on eight stages, with jam bands, such as Cat Power and Death Cab for Cutie, to more traditional bands, such as that of Phil Lesh (an original member of the Grateful Dead) and Blues Traveler.

The West

The Monterey Pop International Pop Festival was conceived by Alan Pariser after he attended the Monterey Jazz Festival. Pariser felt that pop music had matured as an art and that a pop festival would showcase talent in the same way that the jazz festival did. Record executive Benny Shapiro and

rock producer Lou Adler joined the planning and recruited one music group, the Mamas and the Papas, who eventually bought out the promoters and turned the festival into a nonprofit event. A foundation was created, with a board of directors that included Paul McCartney, Mick Jagger, Paul Simon, Smokey Robinson, original Beach Boy Brian Wilson, and others. After extensive planning, over 30 acts were booked to perform at the first festival in 1967, including the Who, the Jimi Hendrix Experience, Buffalo Springfield, the Byrds, Johnny Rivers, Otis Redding, and Janis Joplin with Big Brother and the Holding Company. The Whitney Museum in New York featured a four-month exhibit in 2007, "The Summer of Love: Art of the Psychedelic Era," commemorating the 40th anniversary of the festival that many cultural observers view as a watershed event in the history of pop music.[46]

Colorado has made a concerted effort since 1960 to encourage the creation of festivals offering live performances throughout the state. Since the late 1940s, Aspen has held an annual classical music festival that now runs from June through August and is the only rival to Tanglewood as the top American summer experience for classical music students and performers. Bowing to the waning of audience members for the classical performances, the festival merges seamlessly into Jazz Aspen Snowmass (which has featured more crossover rock than pure jazz in its most recent seasons). Former Colorado mining town Telluride has offered its own set of musical celebrations since the 1970s; classical music fans can enjoy nine days of performances there. For those whose tastes run to bluegrass or country, since the early 1970s, the summer solstice has been brought in at the Telluride Bluegrass Festival. Originally conceived in hard-core bluegrass style, the event now sees rock and jazz musicians joining pickers on stage for concerts.[47]

While New York City is the U.S. birthplace of the Poetry Slam, the West is home to a unique form of spoken word performance termed *cowboy poetry.* When most Americans think of cowboys, they probably visualize a man in jeans, western shirt, and boots who is driving a pickup truck, but both male and female ranch hands still ride the trails on horseback in many parts of the West. Even more surprising, many also celebrate their trade through poetry.

In celebration of their western heritage, cowboy poets, including the Gauchos of the Pampas, Fisher Poets, Badger Clark, Baxter Black, and Paul Zarzyski, interpret their poems at public gatherings. One of these, the National Poetry Gathering, has been held since 1983 at the beginning of each year at the Western Folklife Center in Elko, Nevada. The American national cowboy poet spirit has grown to the point that contests are also held in Heber City and Moab, Utah (including a Buckaroo Fair); Monterey, Big Bear Lake, and Santa Clarita, California; and Sierra Vista, Arizona. All of the venues have held contests for nearly a decade or more. The events range from simple

spoken word presentations and weekend contests to more fully staged poetry events that include guitar and banjo picking to accompany the poems. Some poets do more than just read; they yodel and call the little dogies on the trail. Many events have separate judged contests in tall tale spinning, storytelling, and a challenge to find the best bold-faced liar. Some of these poets and pickers have become so well known that their programming at the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko has attracted major sponsors and Nevada Humanities Council funding. National Public Radio regularly broadcasts the poetry performances.[48]

The western states are known for rodeos, but the term "rodeo" was not generally used until after 1920. Rodeo began as informal contests between herders, wranglers, and ranch hands and developed into a circuit of competitions and performances throughout the United States, many in states outside the West. Each ranch would send one of its best hands in each category to compete in early rodeos, usually after the cattle were brought to market. Some accounts trace the first documented rodeo to Arizona in 1864, although it did not offer

A competitor in the bull-riding event of the ninth annual Idaho Women's Pro Rodeo. © AP Photo/Ted S. Warren.

award money or prizes. The first contests included challenges in riding and roping and featured two professionals who rode the cattle trail that ran beef from Abilene, Kansas, to an area northwest of Pecos, Texas. Trav Windham and Morg Livingston were the main challengers at the first contest held on July 14, 1883, but other cowboys, including a few females, joined the competitions. The contest jumped to another class with the move to its present location in 1936 and the construction of a professional arena and audience viewing stands.

Eastern rodeos have their roots in the Wild West shows that toured the nation since the Civil War. The elaborate productions that included drama, panoramic displays, and animals were a natural addition. Many western cities added rodeos to town heritage celebrations. Some of these events, with rodeos, are still held today, including the Pendleton (Oregon) Roundup and the Cheyenne (Wyoming) and Prescott (Arizona) Frontier Days. Modern rodeo is organized into timed and roughstock events. Bronc-riding and bull-riding contests are termed *roughstock,* owing to the wild nature of animals ridden in the ring. The rider must touch, or spur, the animal to gain points. Timed events include roping, wrestling (sometimes called *dogging*), and barrel racing. The first official rodeo circuit was created in 1934, with competitions in large cities, including the eastern and midwestern metropolitan areas of Detroit, Philadelphia, Indianapolis, Boston, and New York. The current headquarters for professional rodeo is located in Colorado, has over 7,000 members, and sanctions nearly 700 rodeos, with purses totaling over $35 million. There are currently 12 regional rodeo circuits. Rodeo continues to draw crowds of nearly 20,000 to the national finals, with the largest crowds in the western states. Canada and Australia also hold rodeos.[49]

Las Vegas, Nevada, once viewed as simply a place to gamble, has developed into a performance center attracting national and world visitors. Cirque du Soleil is the modern-day recreation of the traditional circus. The company was created in the early 1980s by a collection of street performers who soon added one tent and, since 1993, have been in permanent residence in a showroom on the Las Vegas strip. Other casinos feature live entertainment, including magic, music, and modern follies, but the largest entertainment draw for the city is the legalized gambling.[50]

The Northwest

The Britt Festivals, held since 1962 in the picturesque historic town of Jacksonville, Oregon, on the estate of the late photographer Peter Britt, have attracted audiences to classical, folk, rock, new age, and country performances and an education program that includes camps and music instruc-

tion. Founder John Trudeau turned the direction of the festival over to others after several decades of service. The three weeks of performances in August include the Martha Graham Dance Company, who perform and give dance master classes, and a symphony orchestra that draws 90 professional musicians from orchestras throughout the country. Many of the Britt Festival's classic rock acts also appear on the stages of the Bonnaroo Festival in Tennessee.[51]

Although there are other Shakespeare celebrations in the United States, notably in San Diego and New York City, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival is the largest and oldest in the United States. The festival hosts plays on three stages, with numerous off-festival sites, for eight months beginning in February. Nearly 360,000 theater fans attend the 770 performances given every year. One of the stages, the Elizabethan Theatre, is a restored structure from the turn of the nineteenth century. The grounds were originally used in 1893 as a Chautauqua circuit site for performers such as William Jennings Bryan and bandleader John Phillip Sousa and were enlarged over the years to accommodate more visitors. As the Chautauqua movement lost popularity in the 1920s, the first structure was abandoned. Angus L. Bowmer, an instructor at Southern Oregon Normal School (Southern Oregon University), proposed that a three-play July Shakespeare festival be held during the Depression in 1935, using a stage that was constructed by the State Emergency Relief Administration. The festival covered the costs of the production and made a bit of a profit, and two years later, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival Association was incorporated. The festival was dark during World War II but returned with a new stage in 1947 and a full-time paid general manager in 1953. Additional new construction followed, opening up additional theaters and halls in the 1970s, and by 1978, the festival had completed a second traversal of the complete plays of the bard. By the 1990s, the group had an outreach program in Portland and a new state-of-the-art Elizabethan stage. The festival, named by *Time* magazine as one of the top regional theaters in America in 2003, draws near sellout crowds to dramatic productions and chamber and symphonic music performances.[52]

Perhaps the biggest change over the centuries of American performance, besides the steady and monumental increase in the sheer number of cultural events across the country, is the newfound capability to publicize even the smallest and most remote venues and performances from coast to coast. Regional and geographic isolation once gave rise to distinctly individual styles in many areas, but the proliferation of recordings, radio, and television has made it possible for almost any American to see and hear performances that he or she might never have the chance to experience live. Finally, the Internet

An actor in the Oregon Shakespeare Festival performs in an all-male cast of "Henry IV Part 2." © AP Photo/Oregon Shakespeare Festival, David Coope.

and the rise of downloading have instituted a universal availability of cultural product for anyone in the world who can afford to purchase it.

The generations of today can scarcely imagine the physical, practical, and economic obstacles to experiencing exotic performances that confronted their grandparents. If there is a price to be paid today in lost authenticity, disparate styles blending together, and diminished appreciation for the effort of mounting a live performance, this is counterbalanced somewhat by the fact that Americans can now see, hear, or experience virtually any performance that has ever been recorded, in the privacy of their homes, on the moment.

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9

Art, Architecture, and Housing

Benjamin F. Shearer

Art

> If art is to nourish the roots of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him. We must never forget that art is not a form of propaganda; it is a form of truth.
>
> —President John F. Kennedy

American fine art today has no single style, method, subject matter, or medium. This eclecticism draws from the reworking of past movements, the adoption of new technologies, and the imagination of each artist. Regionalism, defined primarily by its local subject matter, remains an important force in American art. Folk art also remains an important expression of American life. Government support for the arts developed only lately in the United States, and even at that, it was halting and niggardly. The early public art that it supported tended to be propagandistic, thus President Kennedy's admonition in 1963 quoted above. Likewise, most of America's great art museums came into being through the largess of those who had made immense fortunes, rather than through government funding. As a young America of mostly European immigrants looked back to Europe for the best of art as well as fashion and architecture, truly American art took a long time to emerge, and when it did, it changed the focus of the art world.

Art and Artists in America

Fine art and those who create it have a struggling existence in the everyday life of America. Jobs for artists in general are scarce. In 2004, there were

only 208,000 of them. Of those, 94,000 were for multimedia artists and animators. Art directors held another 71,000 jobs; 8,500 jobs fell in all the other categories. That left fine artists, including sculptors, painters, and illustrators, at only 29,000 and craft artists at only 6,100 for the entire nation. The median annual income for fine artists was $38,060 and for craft artists, $23,520, as of May 2004.[1]

Pragmatic Americans find it difficult to value things that are neither necessary nor useful. In 2002, for example, only 29.5 percent of Americans 18 years old or older purchased an artwork at least once. The greater the person's educational attainment, the greater the chances of buying an artwork.[2] Americans are also notorious for avoiding confrontation, preferring businesslike compromise and accommodation so that they can go on with their personal beliefs hidden and intact. American art, however, became purposely confrontational, seeming to delight in iconoclasm. The art that Americans are now accustomed to experiencing has even delved overtly into the realms of religion, race, sex, and politics, the most avoided subjects by American social convention. Contemporary American art, at least much of what is considered avant-garde, is uncomfortable.

The comfortable art, often the romantic realism that Americans seem to prefer, can be found in their homes, where it is decoration. Furniture stores use art on the walls of their displays as props, which set the tone. The display with the big dark wooden desk, green leather chairs, and sofa for the wood-paneled den is complemented by prints of riders attired appropriately in red, black, and white while hunting foxes through a green countryside on chestnut horses. A painting of fluffy white clouds hanging in the deep blue sky illumined by the fainting sunlight with stars twinkling around them adorns the wall above the headboard in the child's bedroom display. There are generic seascapes in the wicker patio furniture display, paintings of bright baskets of flowers for the eating area display, paintings of romantic cottages in idyllic forests for the family room display that say this is home sweet home. Americans are just as likely to buy a painting or print because its colors go with the colors of their walls and furniture as they are to purchase art with a message they enjoy and do not have to figure out.

Great American artists at one time chronicled the nation's history. With artistic license, Benjamin West (1738–1820) depicted death in the French and Indian War and William Penn signing the treaty with Native Americans that would found Pennsylvania. John Trumbull (1856–1843) produced major paintings of the Revolutionary War. Every child in America knows George Washington from the portraits by Gilbert Stuart (1755–1828). Thomas Cole (d. 1848), Frederic Church (1826–1900), and Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902) painted the beauty of the American landscape. George Catlin

(1796–1872) captured the life of Native Americans as it was quickly dissipating into eventual assimilation. What Catlin did with a brush for natives, Mathew Brady (c1823–1896) did with a camera for the Civil War. George Caleb Bingham (1811–1879) captured fur traders and riverboat life in the west on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. Charles Russell (1864–1926) chronicled the passing of the Old West in his paintings.

As the twentieth century opened with America becoming ever more urbanized, Robert Henri (1865–1921), George Luks (1867–1933), Edward Hopper (1882–1967), and the other members of the Ashcan school realistically portrayed life in New York City. Yet as American artists had always taken their cues from old Europe, indeed many had studied at least briefly there, that trend would continue. Modernism came to America before World War I in the various forms of abstract art represented in the paintings of Morgan Russell (1886–1963) and Max Weber (1881–1961), and many others. Modern art and its progeny would come to play a new role in American society that was no longer as historical or natural chronicle. Furthermore, American modernists succeeded in creating an American art. By the end of World War II, many American artists set out to loose themselves from the conventions of representational art and express themselves in new ways alien to many Americans. While all this was going on, however, Norman Rockwell (1894–1978) was still celebrating small-town America in his paintings for the covers of the *Saturday Evening Post.* By the end of the twentieth century, art had appropriated new media and new technologies that proliferated new styles, new messages, and not a little controversy.

During the 1950s, abstract expressionism separated American from European modern art. Jackson Pollock (1912–1956) had forsaken representational art for the art of self-expression in the 1940s. His so-called action paintings were abstracts made by pouring and dripping paint on canvases lying on the floor in a nearly unconscious state of activity and revolutionized American art. He would even claim that he himself did not know what would evolve on canvas as the paint layered. He did believe, however, that the action itself was important because it revealed an inner self, an inner truth. The new age called for a new art, and the new age was American. Mark Rothko's (1903–1970) chromatic studies, Willem De Kooning's (1904–1997) layering of paints to bring birth to emerging forms, Robert Motherwell's (1915–1991) introduction of meaning to abstract forms, and Lee Krasner's (1908–1984) full abstract gestural canvases were all part of abstract expressionism.

Abstract expressionism began taking many turns in the turbulent but artistically innovative 1960s and 1970s. Agnes Martin (1912–) painted grids, and Frank Stella (1936–) did a series of formalized black paintings as well as pinstripes. These minimalists believed that form and content were one;

they were trying to make sense of the 1960s without using symbols and sending messages—pure art for art's sake. Robert Rauschenberg (1925–) and Jasper Johns (1930–) turned to neo-Dadaism, mixing known objects and symbols in their works along with their paint and effectively ending the reign of abstract expressionism. In 1959, Allen Kaprow (1927–2006) started doing happenings, which brought a new vitality and creativity to art in a very nontraditional way. In 1961, Claes Oldenburg (1929–) opened the Store, a happening in which his sculpted objects provided the atmosphere of a variety store, where they were bought and sold. Oldenburg also employed hamburgers and French fries as subjects for his art. Pop art, based solidly and happily on America's mass consumer culture, also emerged in the early 1960s in the works of Roy Lichtenstein (1923–1997), Andy Warhol (1928–1987), Tom Wesselmann (1931–2004), and James Rosenquist (1933–). Campbell's soup cans, Del Monte fruit cans, Coke bottles, Marilyn Monroe, Jackie Kennedy, Elizabeth Taylor, Volkswagen Beetles, and comic books were only some of the subjects for these pop artists.

If the art of abstract expressionism could be criticized as the product of its creator's self-centered egotism, conceptual artists took it a step further, claiming to be arbiters of ideas to the people as they questioned social norms. Thus the concept or idea held greater importance than the art piece itself, as Joseph Kosuth's (1945–) 1967 *Art as Idea as Idea* epitomized. This was the perfect medium for political protest during the Vietnam War era. Its basis was in linguistic theory, and thus it branched rather quickly into performance art, again with the artist-performer as arbiter. Body art came into vogue. Chris Burden (1946–) crawled naked through broken glass on Main Street in Los Angeles in his 1973 performance *Through the Night Softly.* In his 1970 performance of *Trademarks,* Vito Acconci (1940–) bit his body wherever he could, inked the bites, and applied his so-called trademark to different places. Among the feminist artists who were attempting to reclaim women's bodies from a history of use (and abuse, they would argue) by male artists, Carolee Schneemann (1939–) performed *Interior Scroll* in 1975, in which her otherwise nude body was painted, and she read from a scroll she pulled out of her vagina. Photographer Cindy Sherman (1954–) began her series of so-called self-portraits in 1977 with *Untitled Film Still,* which explored stereotypes of women in film. Her later series continue to investigate the development of self-image.

As feminist artists were trying to reappropriate the female body and feminine symbols of art for themselves, African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanics also sought to send a message. Betye Saar (1926–) sought to debunk a familiar stereotype in her 1972 *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima.* Faith Ringgold (1930–) employed the American flag to make her point. Her 1967 *The Flag Is Bleeding* depicted three figures, one black, trapped inside

the U.S. flag, its red stripes bleeding. Her 1969 *Flag for the Moon: Die Nigger Black Light #10* depicted the word *die* in red inside the white stars on the flag's blue field and the word *nigger* formed by the flag's white stripes. This was powerful protest. Fritz Scholder (1937–2005) used his art to try to rid people of the notion of Native Americans as noble savages, preferring to depict his subjects as real people without stereotyping, such as in his 1969 *Indian with a Beer Can.* R. C. Gorman (1931–2005) redefined Indian painting styles with his abstracts. Judith Baca's (1946–) *Great Wall of Los Angeles,* a gigantic, half-mile collaborative effort that was completed over the years 1976–1983, sought an integrative approach to the inclusion of all the cultures that inform Los Angeles life.

The 1960s and 1970s also birthed other artistic experiments. Lynda Benglis's (1941–) *For Carl Andre,* created in 1970, was a scatological example of process art (also called antiform art) in plopping layers of brown polyurethane foam. In this art, the process was clear. As artists continued to try to escape cultural and institutional boundaries, some artists created earthworks in the western deserts. Nancy Holt (1938–) completed *Sun Tunnels* in 1976 in the Great Basin Desert, which consisted of placing four large concrete pipes in an *X* with holes drilled in the sides to reflect constellations. The pipes were placed to view the rising and setting sun through them. Robert Smithson's (1928–1973) *The Spiral Jetty* at the Great Salt Lake is perhaps the best known of the earthworks. It was completed in 1970.

By the mid-1970s, modernism was history. Postmodern art tolerated a diversity of styles that were not necessarily dependent on particular artists. The neoexpressionists brought painting back to large canvases with a style that was recognizable and sellable. Julian Schnabel (1951–) and David Salle (1952–) ushered in this new style that borrowed heavily and liberally from the past to the extent that their work could not be placed in any particular style. Appropriation artists took their cues from America's mass consumer culture. Vacuums, lava lamps, pots and pans, magazine pictures—anything could become art with a message. Installation art, which defines the setting for a piece, and video art were coming of age, too, along with a new generation of artists who made identity politics their cause. Gender, sexuality, and AIDS became the subject matter for artists like Kiki Smith (1954–), Robert Gober (1954–), and Janine Antoni (1964–).

American artists have never been shy in adopting new technologies to their art. Adrian Piper (1948–) took a hidden tape recorder that played belching noises with her to a library for her Catalysis series (1970–1971). Bill Viola (1951–) used video in his installation *Stations* (1994) to project naked human figures onto five hanging screens, which produces the experience of bodies freed of the forces of nature. Tony Oursler (1957–) projected video to make

the faces on inanimate objects come alive. He used this technique in his *Crying Doll* (1993), in which the face of the doll is a moving video, and in his *We Have No Free Will* (1995), with talking puppets. His 1997 *Eye in the Sky* is a video sculpture featuring a fiberglass sphere on which is projected an eye watching television.

The Internet and computer technologies are ripe for artistic exploration. Mark Napier (1961–) mixed up text and images from various Web sites to create his 1999 *Riot* to an arresting effect. New York artist Cory Arcangel (1978–) developed a Web site that juxtaposed singer Kurt Cobain's suicide letter with Google AdSense in 2006. He called his 2005 performance of *I Heart Garfunkel* a "messy lecture/performance involving my slide from the Nintendo iPod to my current obsession with Art Garfunkel." In 2004, Arcangel took the group Iron Maiden's song "The Number of the Beast" and compressed it 666 times as an MP3. Also in 2004, he erased all the invaders but one from the Atari Space Invaders video game, thus creating *Space Invader,* and he did a "mash-up" called *Beach Boys/Geto Boys* of the songs "Little Surfer Girl," by the Beach Boys, and "6 Feet Deep," by Gravediggaz. In Arcangel's *Super Mario Clouds—2005 Rewrite,* he erased everything but the clouds from a Super Mario Brothers Nintendo game and provided the source code and instructions for those who wanted to do it themselves.[3]

Public Art

The federal government had established a precedent in 1927 to devote a percentage of construction costs to art when the Post Office Department and Department of Justice were built at Federal Triangle in Washington, D.C., and for the National Archives building, which opened in 1935. It had long been the government's practice to adorn public buildings with appropriate art and decoration, even though there was no legislative mandate to do so. In 1934, however, a federal percent-for-art program was established that allowed for approximately 1 percent of construction costs to be set aside for art, with the idea that patriotic, democratic, realistic art with local, recognizable cues would inspire Americans otherwise untouched by art to experience good art in federal buildings. Murals and monuments were then the stuff of public art. While the percent-for-art program suffered through shortages during World War II and squabbles about who or what committee should actually hire the artists, by 1973, it was up and running again on a firm footing as the Art in Architecture Program, with experts in charge of commissioning the artists. The installation of Alexander Calder's mobile *Flamingo* in Chicago's Federal Center in that year proved to be a success.[4]

The notion that government buildings should be showcases for relevant, site-specific art was picked up outside of Washington first by Philadelphia

in 1959, by Baltimore in 1964, and by San Francisco in 1967. Later, state governments adopted percent-for-art programs based on the construction costs of state public buildings. The movement spread across the nation. For example, Oregon began its program in 1977; Nebraska in 1978; Maine and New Hampshire in 1979; Wisconsin in 1980; Montana in 1983; Ohio in 1990; and Louisiana in 1999. More than 30 states now have percent-for-art programs.

Public art, bolstered by these federal, state, and municipal percent-for-art programs, began picking up steam in the 1960s. Corporations, private foundations, and other large institutions joined the movement, and in fact, most public art today is not government funded. Public art was to be the socially relevant art that defined public places—plazas, playgrounds, parks and subway stations, walls and building façades. Public art allowed artists to bring their messages to the people; art could be an agent for change. Artists could become the arbiters of public opinion. This idyll was put to the test after the General Services Administration, the federal agency that oversees federal construction projects, commissioned minimalist sculptor Richard Serra (1939–) in 1979 to create a site-specific piece for the Federal Plaza at Fogarty Square in New York City. In 1981, Serra's *Tilted Arc* was dedicated. It was a 120-foot-long, 12-foot-high, 2.5-inch-thick slightly tilted wall of rusted steel. Workers in the federal buildings began complaining about it and petitioned for its removal, and in 1989, the General Services Administration removed *Tilted Arc* from the plaza after a series of court cases and splenetic rhetoric on all sides.

While some couched this public debacle in the terms of ignorant people and politicians who do not understand modern art against an enlightened and misunderstood artist, it did bring forward a fundamental question: What if the public do not want or like the public art their tax money paid for? Throughout the 1980s, public artists wanted to make social statements to advance the people, the public, convincing themselves that they were creating the art of the public. Making public art was doing good for the people. In the 1990s, many public artists began to question their own personal cultural superiority and started creating art in collaboration with the public. With the public actually involved in art making, and with the artist immersed in the culture of the site through the people, American art will have achieved true democracy.

WaterFire, in Providence, Rhode Island, is a stunning example of public art that involves the public directly as volunteers and engages from 40,000 to 60,000 people each performance in exploring the relationship between human existence and the primal elements of water, fire, earth, and air. *WaterFire,* the concept of artist Barnaby Evans, is a site-specific sculpture

Crowds gather along the riverfront to watch Waterfire, an art illustration by Barnaby Evans. The work centers on a series of 100 bonfires that blaze just above the surface of the three rivers that pass through the middle of downtown Providence. © AP Photo/Stew Milne.

and performance. The site is the three rivers that run through downtown Providence. Metal braziers are strategically placed in the water, filled with aromatic oak, cedar, and pine, and set afire at twilight. Volunteers dressed in black tend the fires. Torch-lit boats travel the rivers. An eclectic assortment of music accompanies the performance. *WaterFire* was scheduled for 17 performances in 2006. Evans began his work in Providence in 1994 with an installation called *FirstFire,* and another called *SecondFire* in 1996. These performances were so successful that in 1997, WaterFire was set up as an ongoing nonprofit arts organization.[5]

The National Endowment for the Arts

The U.S. government did not directly support the arts outside of the federal building programs until the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in 1965, save for the emergency arts programs established by President Franklin Roosevelt to provide jobs during the Great

Depression. The NEA began awarding the National Medal of Art in 1985. Several of America's most noted artists have been honored with that award, including Georgia O'Keefe (1985), Willem De Kooning (1986), Robert Motherwell (1989), Jasper Johns (1990), Robert Rauschenberg (1993), Roy Lichtenstein (1995), Agnes Martin (1998), and Claes Oldenburg (2000).

Initial support for the arts was quite meager in the NEA's first year, however, amounting to less than $3 million. NEA appropriations grew steadily, however, reaching nearly $176 million in fiscal year 1992. In the 1970s, the NEA also pursued public art with its Art in Architecture program. Appropriations decreased steadily from that 1992 peak through fiscal year 2000, bottoming at $97.6 million. Since then, funding has increased to nearly $121 million in fiscal year 2004. Although the NEA does support art mostly through grants to mount exhibitions, its national initiatives include supporting jazz presentations, bringing Shakespeare performances to American cities and towns, and supporting arts journalism institutes in opera, theater, classical music, and dance. Its objectives now have to do with access to and learning in the arts.[6] To put the place of arts in the perspective of federal spending, one B2 Spirit bomber costs over $1 billion.

Funds for the NEA, which must be appropriated by the U.S. Congress, nearly came to an end in 1989 when some congressmen and senators found out that NEA funds were used to support exhibitions of so-called obscene art, namely, of the works of Robert Mapplethorpe (1946–1989) and Andres Serrano (1950–). The traveling Mapplethorpe exhibit, which the Corcoran Gallery cancelled owing to political considerations, included homoerotic photographs as well as photographs of nude children. The Serrano photograph that inspired congressional ire was titled "Piss Christ," a photograph of a crucifix emerged in a clear container of the artist's urine. The NEA was using federal tax dollars to exhibit obscene, pornographic, sexually perverted, and sacrilegious material around the country in the view of several members of Congress, and they were outraged. Congress amended the NEA legislation in 1990, instructing the NEA chair to consider "general standards of respect and decency for the diverse beliefs and values of the American public" as grants are awarded.[7]

Federally funded art projects were to be filtered through this so-called decency clause, and four artists, soon dubbed the "NEA 4," challenged this new provision when the NEA yanked away their grants. They claimed that their First Amendment freedom of speech rights had been violated, and they went to court. Karen Finley (1956–), among other things a performance artist, dealt with women's issues sometimes scatologically in such performances as *We Keep Our Victims Ready,* a series of monologues in which she smeared chocolate over her body, which was naked, save for boots and panties. Holly Hughes (1955–), a lesbian performance artist, used explicit sexual

and religious imagery in her show *World without End.* Tim Miller (1958–) explored aspects of his gay identity in such performances as *Some Golden States* in 1987 and *Stretch Marks* in 1989. In *Blessed Are All the Little Fishes,* performance artist and later actor John Fleck (1951–) urinated on stage and simulated masturbation.

The NEA 4's case meandered through the courts and was finally decided by the Supreme Court in 1998. The Court found that because the NEA's decency clause asked only that general standards be considered in awarding grants, the artists' First Amendment privileges were not violated, nor would lack of government funding prevent the artists from performing their art. In short, the NEA 4 lost, and the NEA ceased to award individual grants for avant-garde categories. The American government would not subsidize art that questioned basic American values.

Museums

The Founding Fathers of the United States did not envision the collection of art to be in the purview of government. For one thing, the United States began its existence completely broke and heavily in debt. For another, patronizing the arts surely must have smacked to them to be the stuff of popes, monarchs, and noblemen, all anathema in the new republic. Furthermore, they understood government to have a very small role in domestic life. In 1841, the National Institute was created in the Patent Office to oversee art and historical items the government had come to own. John Varden, its first curator, had begun collecting art privately, and his collection was added to what the government already had. The institute was disbanded in 1862 and its collections sent to the Smithsonian Institution, which was founded in 1846. After a fire at the Smithsonian Castle in 1865, most of the art was loaned out to other museums well into the twentieth century. A 1906 court case caused the Smithsonian's art collection to be named a National Gallery of Art, a heightened status that encouraged donations of new artworks.

The federal government's entrance into art collecting and museums had been, for the most part, accidental to this point, and certainly unenthusiastic. There was no proper federal art museum until financier Andrew W. Mellon donated his European art collection to the United States in 1937, the year he died, and his foundation paid for the building, designed by Eliel Saarinen, to house it. In 1941, the National Gallery of Art opened on the mall in the nation's capital. The Mellon family and foundation also donated funds for the gallery's East Building, designed by I. M. Pei. It opened in 1978. Varden's original collection, greatly enlarged, is housed in the newly renovated Old Patent Office Building and is known as the Smithsonian American Art

Museum. The collection includes the works of more than 7,000 American artists.[8]

The National Gallery of Art was not the first federal art museum. The Smithsonian's first fine art museum was the Freer Gallery. Charles Lang Freer (1854–1919) made a fortune as a railroad car manufacturer in Detroit. He was an avid collector of Asian art and Buddhist sculpture. He gave his collection to the nation along with the money to build a museum. The Freer Gallery opened in 1923. The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of Asian Art is connected to the Freer and was opened in 1987 to house Dr. Sackler's (1913–1987) gift to the country.[9]

There was one case, however, in which the U.S. government aggressively pursued a new collection and museum. President Lyndon Johnson, not known as an art aficionado, sealed the deal with financier Joseph H. Hirshhorn to donate his collection of sculpture, American modernists, and French Impressionists to the American people. Hirshhorn, born in Latvia in 1899, made his fortune in the uranium mining business and considered it an honor to donate his art to the people of the United States. Although Hirshhorn also donated $1 million toward the Gordon Bunshaft–designed Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden of the Smithsonian Institution, government funds made it happen. Ground was broken for the Hirshhorn in 1969, and it opened in 1974. Joseph Hirshhorn, who died in 1981, left substantially all his art to the museum.[10] With the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts in 1965, it may have seemed that the federal government was about to embark on a continuing program to support the arts.

America's great art museums were founded and nurtured not by government, but by the initiatives of citizens, particularly wealthy citizens. New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art, arguably one of the world's great museums, was founded in 1870 by wealthy art patrons and artists seeking to further the democratic ideal of getting art out of private collections and to the people. It took nearly 100 years after the American Revolution before museums began to be established—bringing art to the American people was, therefore, a noble ideal. Banker and financier William Wilson Corcoran (1798–1888), one of America's few collectors of American art, donated his collection and the building that housed it to a board of trustees, who ran the congressionally chartered, tax-exempt Corcoran Gallery of Art. The Corcoran in Washington, D.C., opened in 1874. The Philadelphia Museum of Art was chartered in 1876 as the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art. Again, local business leaders, who wanted a school to support local art and textile industries, and artists, notably Thomas Eakins (1844–1916), got together to see that the City of Brotherly Love would have an art museum. The genesis for the movement was Philadelphia's Centennial Exposition of 1876.

The permanent building, called Memorial Hall, was to be the exposition's art museum. The success of the Centennial Exposition was, in turn, the genesis of citizens of Cincinnati, Ohio, deciding to found an art museum, which opened in 1886. The Art Institute of Chicago was founded in 1879 as the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts, both a school and museum, as Philadelphia's had been, and Mrs. Henry Field was its first major donor.

The movement to establish art museums went all over the country. The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, now with extensive and diverse collections, was established in 1910 without a collection. The Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, Texas, opened in 1924, the result of 24 years of work by the Houston Public School Art League. Today, America has more than 1,700 art museums, and some of its most significant ones were founded in the twentieth century. Wealthy art collectors and patrons Mary Sullivan, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, and Lillie P. Bliss founded the Museum of Modern Art in 1929 in New York City because the large museums were reluctant to collect modern and contemporary art. Thus was established one of the world's premier art museums. Major Duncan Phillips and his wife, Marjorie, left their Washington, D.C., home in 1930 for another residence, turning their old home into an art museum. The Phillips Collection is a major institution of modern art and its origins. Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney founded the Whitney Museum in 1931, with her own collection of twentieth-century American art as its foundation. The Frick Collection was created and endowed by Henry Clay Frick, the Pittsburgh steel magnate. When he died in 1919, he requested that his New York City residence become a museum to house his hundreds of artworks, including old masters, after the death of his wife. The museum opened to the public in 1935.

Oilman J. Paul Getty opened the J. Paul Getty Museum at his Malibu, California, ranch in 1954. Since 1984, the trustees of his estate have sought to promote Getty's belief in art as a humanizing influence by expanding the museum's programs beyond the original campus with the Getty Center in Los Angeles, designed by Richard Meier and Partners and opened in 1997. The collections have been greatly enhanced beyond Getty's collection of antiquities and European paintings and furniture. In 1937, industrialist Solomon R. Guggenheim established his eponymous foundation to operate museums based on his collections of nonobjective art. While Solomon's artworks were put into traveling shows and his niece Peggy Guggenheim was making her own name in the art world as a dealer and patron, the first permanent home for the Guggenheim opened in Frank Lloyd Wright's famous New York City landmark in 1959. The Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, opened in a Louis I. Kahn–designed building in 1972. It was established through a foundation by entrepreneur Kay Kimbell, his wife, and

his wife's sister and her husband. The museum houses a diverse collection reaching back to antiquity.

Traveling museum exhibits take important art throughout the country. The Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA) in Cleveland, Ohio, recently exhibited some of the paintings of Dana Schutz (1976–) completed between 2002 and 2006. Schutz tried to extend reality into the imaginary in her paintings. These included selections from her series Self-Eaters. MoCA also exhibited two shows of Catherine Opie's (1961–) photographs, "1999" and "In and Around the House." The "1999" photographs were taken on a trip around the country in 1999; the photographs of the other show depict a close look at American life at home, with Opie's family as subjects. In an exhibit called Sarah Kabot: On the Flip Side, emerging Cleveland artist Sarah Kabot (1976–) had the opportunity to show her interest in the relationship between form and content through her art, which included transforming a spiral notebook into a new meaning.[11]

In Houston, Texas, the Contemporary Arts Museum presented its patrons with the traveling exhibit Kiki Smith: A Gathering, 1980–2005. Smith's exploration of humanity and spirituality could be discovered in about 250 works in diverse media. In its Perspectives series, the museum gives artists their first opportunities for museum exhibition. Artists who have lately exhibited in this series include Michael Bise, who draws domestic scenes; Soody Sharifi, who photographs communities; Janaki Lennie, who paints cityscapes; and Demetrius Oliver, who is a Houston conceptual artist engaged in performance, sculpture, and photography. The Houston museum also mounted a traveling retrospective of Sam Gilliam's (1933–) draped paintings. Gilliam took canvases off stretchers and walls, turning them into three-dimensional installations.[12]

The Contemporary Art Center of Virginia in Virginia Beach featured Watering, an exhibition of 24 photographs by Elijah Gowin (1967–). Gowin used composite photos from the Internet that he built digitally into montages, and which he then, as negatives, put through a scanning and printing process to invoke contemporary meaning for the act of baptizing. The Butler Institute of American Art in Youngstown, Ohio, showed Lightboxes and Melts. Artist Ray Howlett (1940–) produced light sculptures using LED technology. The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art featured a nearly three-month run of the Drawing Restraint series, an ongoing work of art by Matthew Barney (1967–). It is a performance-based project that employs film, photography, drawing, sculpture, and video to investigate the idea that form comes out of struggle against resistance.[13]

The attendance rate for art museums across the United States is 34.9 percent, which means that only about one in three Americans visits an art

museum in a given year. There are regional variations, however, in attendance rates. New England (42.4%), the Mid-Atlantic (38.7%), and the Pacific Northwest with Hawaii (39.7%) exceed the national average. The attendance rate in the south Atlantic region is bolstered by Florida (35.5%), but its overall rate is only 30.5 percent. (This region includes the states of Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware.) The west south central region outside of Texas, which exactly meets the national rate, has an attendance rate of only 26.5 percent. This region includes Texas as well as Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas. Art museum attendance in the mountain states (Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico) at 40 percent exceeds the national average. In the east south central region, including Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama, the attendance rate at art museums is a meager 24.8 percent. The Midwest generally meets the national rate. When participation rates in art experiences through television are considered, however, most regions come near or above the national rate of 45.1 percent. The east south central region is the notable exception at only 36.5 percent.[14] The American Association of Museums reported in 2003 that median annual attendance for art museums totaled 61,312, whereas zoos had 520,935; science and technology museums had 183,417; arboretums and botanical gardens had 119,575; children's/youth museums had 85,088; and natural history museums had 64,768.[15]

The Contemporary Art Scene

The Whitney Biennial is an important event that showcases contemporary American art and may therefore be considered representative of what is happening in the American art scene. Among the artists whose works were chosen for inclusion in the 2006 Biennial, called Day for Night, was Los Angeles artist Lisa Lapinski (1967–), whose installation *Nightstand* was inspired by the contradiction between simple Shaker furniture and the religious ecstasy depicted in Shaker gift drawings. In this sculpture, the basic wooden nightstand adorned with curious decorations seems to have exploded in all directions. Trisha Donnelly (1974–) is a conceptual/performance artist from San Francisco. Her demonstrations rely on unpredictability to transcend the time and place of exhibition. For her, art is ephemeral, but it can be the vehicle to a brief transcendent experience. Lucas Degiulio (1977–), also working out of San Francisco, likes to make small sculptures out of things he finds and transform them into a sort of otherness. His *Can Barnacles* in the Biennial is a barnacle-encrusted aluminum can.

Four Houston, Texas, artists, all members of Otabenga Jones & Associates, an artists' collective founded in 2002 and dedicated to educate young

African Americans about the fullness of the African Americans experience, were picked for individual works in the Biennial. Jamal Cyrus (1973–) invented a mythical record company of the 1970s, and his collage, on a Cream album, depicts in a cutout a group of African American militants marching with fists raised and carrying a coffin. His 2005 piece is called *The Dowling Street Martyr Brigade, "Towards a Walk in the Sun."* Robert A. Pruitt (1975–) sought to comment on the African Americans struggle in his 2005 *This Do in Remembrance of Me.* Hair, iPods, a mixer, wine, and other offerings lay on a communion table. Kenya A. Evans (1974–) employed texts to diminish and bolster the importance of history books, while a slave on the ground attempts to defend himself helplessly from a robotic slave master. Her canvas is titled *Untitled (Overseer).* A drawing by Dawolu Jabari Anderson (1973–) is titled *Frederick Douglass Self-Defense Manual Series, Infinite Step Escape Technique #1: Hand Seeks Cotton* is an ink and acrylic on paper that the artist treated to give it an historical look.

The 2006 Whitney Biennial, if nothing else, exposed the great diversity of American art today. Los Angeles–based Mark Grotjahn (1968–) showed his debt to the conceptual art of an earlier era in his *Untitled (White Butterfly).* Matthew Monahan (1972–), also based in Los Angeles, explored the human body inside and outside in his drawings and sculptures. Another Los Angeles–based artist, Mark Bradford (1961–), is famous for his mixed media collages, installations, and videos that may include string, magazine pages, and ads found on city lampposts.

Angela Strassheim (1969–), who divides her time between New York City and Minneapolis, Minnesota, employed her training as a forensic photographer to create extremely crisp color photographs of the grotesque and the ordinary. Anthony Burdin of California, who insists on being ageless, made his fame singing along with tunes as he photographed the passing scenery from his 1973 Chevy Nova, in which he claims to have lived. New Yorker Kelley Walker (1969–) used a computer, scanner, and photo software along with such things as smeared and dabbled chocolate and toothpaste on archival images to create digitally printed two-dimensional abstracts. In Austin, Texas, Troy Brauntich (1954–), working from photographs, has managed to veil representational art to make it something other than itself. His 2005 *Untitled (Shirts2)* in the Biennial, a 63 by 51 inch conté crayon on black cotton depiction of folded shirts in a rack, is almost ethereal. There is nothing ethereal, however, about Dash Snow's (1981–) photographs of his life in New York City, including a dog eating garbage.

Inventive American artists can turn about anything into art, as the Biennial demonstrated. New York City's Dan Colen (1979–) used wood, steel, oil paint, papier-mâché, felt, and Styrofoam to create *Untitled.* This 96 by 108

by 96 inch sculpture appears to be a poorly constructed, graffiti-encrusted wooden fence, the kind of fence the little rascals may have built around their clubhouse. Los Angeles sculptor Liz Larner (1960–), who uses color to draw attention to her works, rather than form, used aluminum tubing, fabric and ribbons, batting, wire rope, padlocks, and keys to create her 82 by 117 by 117 inch *RWBs* in the Whitney show. It appears to be a completely formless but colorful pile of stiffened spaghetti.[16]

While the Whitney Biennial shows may be said to be mounted within the tradition of avant-garde American art in the spirit of art for art's sake, the U.S. government uses American art for politics' sake, thus revealing another side of American art. The embassies of the United States around the world act in part as art museums to show American art. The U.S. Department of State established its ART in Embassies Program in 1964 to mount exhibitions of original American art in the public rooms of diplomatic installations at some 180 international locations. The purpose of the program is to "provide international audiences with a sense of the quality, scope, and diversity of American art and culture" through the work of American artists.[17] In 2004, the ART in Embassies Program, working with the Bureau of International Information Programs, showcased 17 of the younger program artists in the hope of increasing "international understanding" and in the belief that experiencing their art would also be to experience the fundamental American values of "innovation, diversity, freedom, individualism [and] competitive excellence." Their works were chosen because they reflect "the great imaginative variety of the current American art scene."[18]

Among the artists whose works are shown around the world is Philip Argent (1962–), who lives in Santa Barbara, California. He is influenced by the layering of visual effects in the way that Windows software presents information. He uses that technique and puts together seen objects with imagined ones to produce various optical effects. His acrylic and diamond dust on canvas called *Window Drop #1* (2000) is a primary example of his technique. Graham Caldwell (1973–) of Washington, D.C., sculpts in glass. His 2002 work *Elizabeth's Tears* illustrates in glass, steel, water, and wood his exploration of connection and interdependence. New Mexico artist Lauren Camp (1966–) designs colorful threadworks about jazz because she claims to be able to hear colors and shapes in the music. New York City photographer Gregory Crewdson (1962–) attempts to involve viewers of his work in a narrative from a frozen moment in time. In his Natural Wonders series, he uses the beauty of nature to engage the viewer. New York City native Hillary Steel (1959–) is a textile artist. Her use of color is ordinarily quite bright, but her *Current Events* (2001) is made of hand-woven newspaper and cotton, making her point that the cloth or fabric itself has a structure and a history

that allows it to deliver messages. Will Cotton (1964–), who lives in New York City, does oil paintings of confections on linen. His paintings, such as *Brittle House* (2000), a miniature, idyllic cottage made of peanut brittle, and *Flanpond* (2002), four flans that appear to be floating on flowery water, look good enough to eat and evoke a perfect world of unfettered consumption. Nicole Cohen (1970–) of Los Angeles is a video installation artist. Pictures of rooms become the stages (a digital print) on which a performance video is projected. Santiago Cucullu (1969–) was born in Argentina but raised in the United States. He is interested in large wall pieces, which include *Lunchtime, the Best of Times* (2002), a high shelf of folded plastic tablecloths, and *Come to Me* (2002), a wall of colorful plastic table skirting.

Benjamin Edwards (1970–) of Washington, D.C., chooses his subject matter out of the consumer society he inhabits to create new syntheses from unorganized realities, as in his *Starbucks, Seattle: Compression* (1998). Kiev-born Valerie Demianchuk, now of New York City, intensifies the essence of her subject matter in detailed graphite drawings on plain drawing paper; her 2001 *Terra Firma (Dry Land)* is but one example. Jason Falchook of Washington, D.C., is a photographer who explores life within the boundaries of communities and sometimes uses inkjet printers to produce his pieces. Trenton Doyle Hancock's (1974–) mixed media pieces are inspired by the discarded things (garbage) he finds, which, he believes, have their own stories to tell. Dante Marioni (1964–) is a glassblower who creates his colorful and fanciful pieces in homage to the history of the craft. Stacy Levy (1960–) of Philadelphia uses her art, rather than science, to evoke a heightened sense of nature. Her *Mold Garden* (1999–2002) is made of sandblasted glass, agar, and mold spores.[19]

Folk Art

American folk art, more pejoratively known as primitive art or naïve art, is the product of unschooled artists and arguably an unvarnished insight into American life. This is outsider art—outside the academic tradition. America's best-known folk artist was probably Anna Mary Robertson Moses, or Grandma Moses (1860–1961). A farmer's wife and mother of five children who lived in rural eastern New York State, she did not take up painting until she was in her seventies. With a bright palette, she depicted the simple life and the natural beauty around her. Her paintings are of a happy America. Earl Cunningham (1893–1977) was born in Maine but eventually settled in St. Augustine, Florida. He had been a tinker, a seaman who worked up and down the Atlantic coast, and a chicken farmer before he opened his curio shop in Florida in 1949. Even before moving to Florida, however, he had begun to paint vividly colored fanciful landscapes of the places he had visited.

These, too, are happy paintings. Cunningham's works are the foundation of the Mennello Museum of American Art in Orlando, Florida.[20]

The essence of folk art is self-expression. While some early American folk artists like Joshua Johnson (1763–1824) and Ammi Phillips (1788–1865) were portrait painters, Pennsylvania artist Edward Hicks (1780–1849), a Quaker and a preacher, used many of his paintings to deliver moral and religious lessons. Bill Traylor (1854–1949) was born a slave in Alabama. For 82 years, he remained at the place where he was born, and then he moved to nearby Montgomery, Alabama, where he began drawing the scenes around him. Henry Darger (1892–1973), who stole himself out of a deplorable children's home for the so-called feeble-minded to become a janitor in Chicago, created an entire unreal life in his small apartment, written and illustrated by himself. The American Folk Art Museum in New York City celebrates Outsider Art Week in January.

Architecture and Housing

> The mother art is architecture. Without an architecture of our own we have no soul of our own civilization.
>
> —Frank Lloyd Wright

It is curious that no one anywhere would identify a photograph of any street in any American city as a street in Johannesburg, Paris, Istanbul, or Rio de Janeiro because it looks American. Yet for all the efforts of architects at one time to create an American architecture, none emerged. Likewise, American residential neighborhoods look American, but here again, houses, too, appear to be copies of historical relics built with locally available materials. American buildings, having gone through a history of derivative European architecture, are now said to be eclectic and regional. A walk through any city or residential neighborhood proves the point. Banks in central cities may demonstrate their financial strength through Ionic columns, Romanesque stonework, or towering heights in glass and steel. In many suburban neighborhoods, faux Spanish colonial, French provincial, Tudor revival, Dutch colonial, and Greek revival houses may share the same block.

This is not to say that the potpourri of styles that constitutes American architecture, public and residential, are not without American values. George Washington and Thomas Jefferson spent decades building their homes, Mount Vernon and Monticello, to make statements that endure. Washington, the consummate practical farmer, military hero, and father of the nation, found a way to wed the grand style befitting a public man with the comforts of private life. His final rendering of Mount Vernon, garnered

from his perusal of the pedestrian English building guides available to him, suggested with Palladian and neoclassical accents that this home was a temple of democracy. Calling to mind the ancient Roman republic, Mount Vernon became a symbol of the strength of democracy, an American castle, a sacrosanct place in which the occupants were safe, a place replicated to this day all over America.

For Jefferson, Monticello was as much a home as it was an idea and an ideal. He famously denigrated architecture in colonial America. Jefferson sought perfection in classical architecture, borrowing liberally from English and French architectural studies of classical buildings. The disciplines of art and architecture blurred in Jefferson's works. He believed America needed architecture to express its unique place in the world, and it was he who would proffer the reworked Roman temple as the exemplar of American democratic architecture: bold, pure, solid. In fact, Jefferson's design for the Virginia statehouse, widely copied in the South for libraries and other public buildings, was squarely based on a Roman temple. What made Jefferson's architecture American, however, was the freedom he felt to blend and marry differing classical styles together. It was Jefferson who would set the tone for America's aspirations and public architecture for years to come.

American Cities

American cities look young and orderly. They express a kind of hopefulness and vitality. Most of them were laid out on grids, with straight streets and broad avenues. While sections of cities developed over time around entrepreneurial visions punctuated by freestanding, single architectural statements, the grid maintains a certain civic unity. It also defines the footprints of the buildings and the public spaces where commerce can take place.

The rapid expansion of the United States was all about the successful entrepreneurial commerce that took place on Main Street America. For a century from the 1850s, these small-town and city commercial centers provided one-stop shopping for burgeoning populations and businesses. Grocery stores, drugstores, hardware stores, furniture stores, clothing stores, emporiums, shoe stores, jewelry stores, banks, hotels, theaters, restaurants, doctors' and lawyers' offices, repair shops, candy stores, billiard halls, bars and grills—all these and more came together in commercial buildings remarkably alike across the country. America's commercial Main Street architecture was dominated by the supremacy of street-level trade; that is, access to first-floor businesses from wide sidewalks that invited business activity was easy, and parking for horses and buggies and cars was immediately available off the sidewalks. One-story businesses, in detached buildings and rows, popped up everywhere. The popular two- and three-story buildings were clearly defined

into two zones: the commercial, public spaces on the first floor and more private spaces on upper floors. Thus doctors' offices might be above drugstores or hotel rooms or apartments above shoe stores. Some twentieth-century buildings began to feature framed large windows for displays, and as land values increased, buildings began getting taller, but five stories was considered a maximum, until passenger elevators and structural steel made the sky the limit.[21]

No matter the style of the façades, which were often designed in the style prevalent at the time, Main Street America still has a familiar feel for Americans, even though it has fallen on hard times. With the shift of population to suburbs and the development of shopping malls to serve it, large central city commercial districts fell into disuse and disrepair. Likewise, the thousands of Main Streets in small towns across the country experienced a similar demise because small mom-and-pop businesses could not compete against big chain stores with more variety and better prices. In American memory, however, Main Street is the real America—a safe place with a bustling friendliness and hardworking, honest merchants who treat their customers as kings and queens. Happily, urban renewal and historic preservation programs have brought some Main Streets back, reincarnated as specialty shops and boutiques that may make their revenues more from Internet sales than foot trade. The big crowds are at the shopping malls. That old Main Street America feeling, replete with penny candy and ice cream sodas, is now mostly the stuff of theme park–induced imagination.

The only thing that could be more idyllic than visiting Walt Disney World's Main Street would be to live in it, or at least a version of it. Seaside, an 80-acre development on Florida's northern Gulf Coast, hatched a movement called the *new urbanism.* Begun in 1981, its pastel-painted wooden cottages with front porches catch the Gulf breezes. White picket fences both define properties and invite conversation with passers-by. Everything is within walking distance: the small stores and the town square where community events take place. The streets are narrower than Americans are accustomed to; cars do not dominate the streets, and garages do not dominate the front of the homes. In fact, the entire development is scaled down from normal size to give it the feel of a manageable urban environment. Critics may have called Seaside a la-la land with strict rules, but it sparked a revolution.

The primary architects of Seaside, Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, were among the founders of the Congress for the New Urbanism in 1993. It now claims some 2,000 members worldwide. The congress's charter takes a stand in favor of restoring urban centers, rationalizing suburban sprawl "into communities of real neighborhoods," conserving the environment, and preserving what is already built. Furthermore, it declares that land develop-

ment policies and practices should further diversity "in use and population"; support the automobile as well as mass transit and pedestrian traffic; shape urban areas by the use of "accessible public spaces and community institutions"; and employ architecture and landscape design based on "local history, climate, ecology, and building practice" to frame urban areas. Finally, the group's charter commits to "reestablishing the relationship between the art of building and the making of community." This would occur only when citizens participate in planning and designing their communities.[22] Idealism is not dead in American architecture; looking back to an idealized past is always comfortable.

America's efforts to revitalize urban centers began in the 1960s and continues. In the largest cities, urban malls, some of them spectacular, like Liberty Place in Philadelphia, were built around subway and train stops. The value of waterfront property was realized in New York City's South Street Seaport and Baltimore's Inner Harbor. In Boston, a dilapidated old Faneuil Hall was renovated and reborn as a modern marketplace. In Washington, D.C., the Old Post Office was reclaimed as a tourist attraction featuring small shops and food, and the magnificent train station near the Capitol was restored as a busy tourist center, with a number of retail establishments and still with arriving and departing trains as well as a subway stop. With developments like San Francisco's Embarcadero Center and Chicago's Water Tower Place, American cities have taken on a new look. The new Main Street of America's big cities is spacious, tall, glass and steel–encased retail, office, eating, and drinking establishments and living quarters that are not necessarily dependent on the automobile. They are safe places.

American Architects

Benjamin Latrobe (1764–1820), who designed the U.S. Capitol, was British, having come to America in 1796. Even the first U.S.-born American architect, Charles Bullfinch (1763–1844), traveled to Europe for inspiration. His Massachusetts State House, completed in 1798, demonstrated his debt to the classicism then current in England.[23] America had no professional architecture program, until the first was established in 1865 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. There were 13 professional programs by 1900, but they were all modeled after the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, where many American architects had studied.[24] America's affair with English classical architecture was therefore reinforced by Beaux-Arts classicism. Indeed, architects chose classical buildings to make the statement to the world that the United States was no longer a second-rate power in any respect at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

Skyscrapers were the chance for American architects to shine. In 1875, a skyscraper was a 10-story building. When architect Cass Gilbert's New York

City Woolworth Building was completed in 1913, it stacked 60 tall stories to a height of 792 feet. In 1931, what was long America's tallest building, the Empire State Building, was built to 102 stories and a total height of 1,252 feet, dwarfing the 1930 Chrysler Building at only 1,046 feet. These three skyscrapers defined and redefined the New York City skyline, yet they remain period pieces. The Woolworth Building is swept with Gothic ornament. The verticality of Gothic architecture seemed to lend itself to skyscrapers for there were no other precedents for what these tall buildings might look like. The Chrysler Building is full-blown art deco, with decoration relating to automobiles, Chrysler's livelihood. The Empire State Building is in a muted art deco style.

Operating out of Chicago, architect Louis Sullivan (1856–1924) had some ideas about tall buildings. He believed that they should embrace their tallness in new ways and that their forms should follow the buildings' functions. The Wainwright Building in downtown St. Louis, which was completed in 1892, is on the National Register of Historic Places because Sullivan and his partner, Dankmar Adler, dealt with steel and glass and brick and terra cotta for a tall building in an entirely new way.

The 10-story Wainwright Building respected the urban tradition of differentiating public from office functions in the façade. The first two stories are defined as retail and public space—this was form following function. However, in no other respect was this building traditional. The brick piers of the façade that extend from above the second floor to the terra cotta cornice that caps the building suggest the strength of the structural steel they hide, but more significantly, they suggest the tallness of the building itself. Likewise, the larger corner posts, although not structurally functional, suggest the strength of the steel that is really the structure of the building in terms recognizable to the uninitiated. Terra cotta spandrels or panels between the windows lend horizontal cues to the building. Sullivan varied the organic designs of the spandrels above each floor, thus solving the issue of ornament in this new architecture. These terra cotta panels as well as the cornice were not the work of artisans, but they could be produced mechanically. While Sullivan's design of the Wainwright Building predated the modern skyscraper, it was decidedly an American contribution to the tall building.

The United States now has nine skyscrapers that hover above 1,000 feet. Among the top five are the Sears Tower in Chicago, with 110 stories, which is the tallest at 1,450 feet. The Empire State Building is 102 stories at 1,250 feet. The Aon Centre in Chicago, although only 80 stories, rises to a height of 1,136 feet. Chicago also has America's fourth tallest building, the John Hancock Center, which has 100 stories at 1,127 feet. New York City's Chrysler Building, with 77 stories, rises to 1,046 feet.

Another original American architect worked for Adler and Sullivan from 1888 until 1903. Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959) always claimed Sullivan as his mentor, even though his influences were quite diverse and even included Japanese architecture. Wright's enduring legacy to American architecture would be his liberation of the house from a rabbit warren to an open space, but his final work, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City, gave America one of its signature buildings. If Wright was a member of any particular school, it was his own. His cantilevered buildings and houses suggested an organic architecture springing from nature like branches unfolding from trees. Nature and technology could be complementary. In the Guggenheim, however, technology and modern materials—molded concrete and steel—are formed into a plastic sculpture. The form of the sculpture was defined by the function of a museum: to view art, in this case, on spiraling ramps. The museum was completed in 1959, shortly after Wright's death.

In 1932, American architecture was awakened from its classical slumber by a show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York that was called Modern Architecture: International Exhibition. The show went on the road,

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, stands out architecturally. Corbis.

and a book called *The International Style: Architecture Since 1922* by Henry Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson was based on it.[25] Johnson would later attend architecture school and prove one of its most famous practitioners. The international style—modern architecture—opened a new avenue of expression for American architecture because it condemned historical decoration, classical symmetry, and mass, all the stuff of traditional American architecture. As fate would have it, two of Europe's greatest modernist architects ended up as citizens of the United States. Walter Gropius, who founded the Bauhaus in Germany in 1919, came to the United States to direct Harvard's Graduate School of Design in 1937, retiring in 1952. In that same year, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe came to the United States and was ensconced in the Armour Institute of Technology as head of its architecture program from 1938 until 1958. Mies's Seagram Building in New York City, completed in 1958, is considered the height of his work and spawned glass and steel towers of simple elegance in many of America's largest cities. To Mies, less was more.

It was Philip Johnson (1906–2005) who first brought Mies to America, and he collaborated with him on the Seagram Building. The pure lines of international-style glass and steel towers became so ubiquitous across America's cities (America was not alone in this experience) that they attained a kind of anonymity, save for the color of the glass. Most Americans found them sterile and bereft of meaning. Johnson's famous glass house, an homage to Mies, which he built in 1949 in New Canaan, Connecticut, is a case in point. This glass and steel box looked more like an architectural statement than home sweet home to the American eye, but Johnson lived in it. In the dominant architectural circles, however, modernism represented the perfect mingling of materials, technology, precision, and art—the essence of modern architecture. The form and the materials were themselves the decoration.

Johnson, however, began to crawl out of the box, as it were. In 1967, he joined with architect John Burgee. In their design for the IDS Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, completed in 1973, modern architecture appeared sleek, but with human spaces—a glass atrium and elevated walkways. Their 1976 Pennzoil Place in Houston was another innovation—modern architecture truly out of the box and now shaped to dramatic effect. Johnson then began wedding historicism to modern architecture methods. His 1984 Republicbank Center in Houston was topped with ever-taller three-stepped pyramids. His AT&T Building (now Sony) in New York City, also in 1984, was controversial—it was apparently inspired by furniture, a Chippendale highboy. While controversial, it was another architectural statement by Johnson, namely, that the European modernism he helped to introduce to

America and that dominated American architecture for 50 years was nearly dead.

The Pritzker Architecture Prize was inaugurated in 1979 to recognize the world's most significant architects. Often referred to as architecture's Nobel Prize, Philip Johnson was its first recipient. In accepting the prize, Johnson noted that "new understandings are sweeping the art." He hoped that architects might, as they had in the past, "join painting and sculpture once more to enhance our lives."[26]

Modernist architects were employing technology to build forms other than boxes. One of America's most recognizable buildings, William Pereira Associates' 1972 Transamerica Pyramid in San Francisco, defines both the corporation (it appears in all its advertisements) and the cityscape. Kevin Roche and John Dinkeloo completed the sculptures that had been designed under Eero Saarinen after his death. Two of the buildings are quite familiar to travelers: the old TWA terminal at New York's JFK International Airport and Washington, D.C.'s, Dulles International Airport. Roche was awarded the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 1982, a year after Dinkeloo's death. Ieoh Ming Pei, born in China in 1917, came to America from China in 1935. He became the master of geometrical shapes in architecture. His well-known designs include the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library and Museum outside Boston; the East Building of the National Gallery of Art in the nation's capital; and the Jacob K. Javits Center in New York City. Cleveland, Ohio, is home to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, opened in 1995 and designed by Pei. His famous pyramid at the Louvre is known throughout the world.

Modern architecture was taking shape in many different ways as architects grew restive under orthodox international style. Robert Venturi received the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 1991. The jury's citation noted that his 1966 book *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* "is generally acknowledged to have diverted the mainstream of architecture away from modernism."[27] Venturi argued essentially that modern architecture had lost context in its struggle for simplicity and clarity. Buildings were being designed to mythic architectural ideals, rather than to the site or historical cues. The contradiction and complexity that can be observed in the architecture of any city should be part and parcel of the new architecture. There should not be one school of architecture, but many. Buildings should have meaning. Thus none of Venturi's buildings look alike. The Seattle Art Museum looks nothing like Oberlin College's Allen Memorial Art Museum.

The symbolic end of modern architecture in America occurred in 1972 when the main buildings of the modernist Pruitt-Igoe housing project in

St. Louis were dynamited. Opened in 1955 and designed by American architect Minoru Yamasaki, who also designed New York City's ill-fated World Trade Center twin towers, Pruitt-Igoe represented high-rise housing for the poor in a new age. By the time it was demolished, it had become a drug-infested, crime-ridden, hellish place. Modern architecture, contrary to its hopes and beliefs, proved not to be ennobling.

Frank Gehry won the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 1989, and he was the last American to receive that award until Thom Mayne was named the laureate for 2005. Both operating out of California, they typify where American architecture is now. Gehry gained notice in 1979 when he renovated his 1920s Santa Monica bungalow into a deconstructed expression of architecturally curious materials (plywood, chain-link fencing) and unexpected planes. In his later and larger works, Gehry successfully used new technologies to create voluminous space in various forms that came together in buildings whose interiors were solidly functional. His Frederick R. Weisman Art and Teaching Museum at the University of Minnesota, completed in 1993, is one such example. His Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, finished in 1997, is an exquisite example that rivals and even vaguely recalls Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim in New York. Clearly architecture for him is art, and his buildings are sculptures. The Pritzker jury complimented Gehry's risk taking and forward vision at a time when most were looking backward. The jury also noted that Gehry's work is "refreshingly original and totally American, proceeding as it does from his populist Southern California perspective."[28]

Thom Mayne founded his firm Morphosis in 1972 in Los Angeles. He and his firm have designed buildings all around the world. However, as the Pritzker jury pointed out, Mayne's approach to architecture "is not derived from European modernism, Asian influences, or even from American precedents of the last century." Indeed, his work is original and "representative of the unique . . . culture of Southern California."[29] Mayne's works defy labels, but they are absolutely marriages of art, technology, and engineering that are at one with their environments and attentive to clients' program objectives. Mayne and his colleagues have designed a number of innovative schools, including the celebrated Diamond Ranch High School in Pomona (1999) and the Science Center School (2004), as well as office buildings and residential complexes in the Los Angeles area, but their most interesting designs may be yet to come. Morphosis won the competition for the Olympic Village in New York City and the state of Alaska's new capitol. This new capitol building would incorporate a dome—the symbol of most state capitols, fashioned after the U.S. Capitol—but not in classical form. This would be an elliptical, translucent dome that would be lit as a beacon

of democracy in a thoroughly contemporary setting that could dominate the city of Juneau.

Housing

There are 119,117,000 housing units in the United States of America. Excluding seasonal housing units, there are 116,038,000 that may be occupied year-round. The American dream is to own a home, and when most Americans think of owning a home, they usually think of a detached single-family house, that is, a house whose walls stand alone and do not touch the neighbor's. More than 71.5 million of America's housing units are those dream houses. There are also some 8.2 million manufactured or mobile home residential units; 670,000 units in cooperatives; and 5.6 million condominium units. The remainder of the housing units are composed of attached structures such as apartment buildings, row houses, and townhouses. Half of all American housing units were built before 1969.[30]

Only a little over 24.1 million housing units lie outside of metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), which are federally defined areas in and around large population centers (cities) that are socioeconomically interdependent. MSAs are, then, urban areas that include dependent suburbs. Almost 92 million housing units lie inside MSAs, but of them, only about 35 million are in central cities, whereas 57 million are in the suburbs of those cities. Thus nearly half of America's housing stock is in the suburbs.[31]

American year-round residences are not primitive by any standard. Virtually 100 percent have all plumbing facilities and heating equipment, with natural gas favored to electricity 59 percent to 37 percent. Over 10.5 percent of residential units use heating oil. The vast majority are tied into public sewer and water systems. Of the housing units, 114 million of them have full kitchens (sink, refrigerator, stove or range), and 67 million have dishwashers; 52.6 million have garbage disposals installed in the kitchen sink, 90 million have washing machines, and over 67 million also have clothes dryers. Over 65 million have central air-conditioning, but another 25 million units have window units.

Builders continue to build the homes Americans want. In 2005, they started 2.06 million new housing projects, of which 1.72 million, about 85 percent, were single-family houses. The American dream comes, however, at a price. In 1980, the average price of a new home was $76,400. In 2005, it was $295,100. The prices of existing single-family homes likewise have risen, much to the pleasure of those who stayed in them, but they were slightly less expensive to purchase than new homes. They averaged $257,500 in 2005, and the median was $207,300. In 2005, new home sales totaled 1.28 million units, and existing single-family home sales came to 6.18 million.

Affordable housing has become an issue: 1.3 million American households are in public housing units operated by 3,300 local housing agencies, to which the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development administers federal aid.[32] Housing is also a racial issue that is reflected in home ownership when considering the race of the householder. Sixty-nine percent of all Americans own their own home. Non-Hispanic whites exceed the national norm at 76 percent, but no minority group even meets the norm. African American home ownership stands at 49.1 percent; Hispanic home ownership at 46.7 percent; and Asian home ownership at 59.8 percent. One ongoing survey of housing prices found that in the first quarter of 2006, only 41.3 percent of the new and existing homes sold that quarter could be afforded by families whose income was at the national median of $59,000. Among large MSAs, Indianapolis, Detroit, Youngstown, Rochester, and Buffalo were found to be the most affordable.[33] These areas are not, however, where housing is expanding. The hottest housing markets in the United States in 2005 in terms of single-family housing permits were the MSAs of Atlanta, Phoenix, Houston, Dallas, and Riverside, California.

Most of America's homes built before 1969—half of all homes, as noted earlier—survive. Comparing some of the features of new 1950 homes, built during the boom of babies and houses that followed World War II, to new 2004 homes helps to understand how American houses have changed. The new home of 1950 had, on average, 983 square feet of finished area. In fact, 62 percent of them had less than 1,200 square feet; 19 percent had 1,200–1,599 square feet; and only 17 percent had between 1,600 and 1,999 square feet. None was larger than 2,000 square feet. The new home of 2004, however, averaged 2,349 square feet, even though the size of American families has dwindled since 1950. Fully 57 percent of these homes had 2,000 square feet or more—39 percent had 2,400 square feet or more. Americans want a lot of space, and with easy credit and innovative mortgage packaging (interest-only mortgages, for example), some can get it.[34]

The typical new home of 1950 was one story (86%), had two or fewer bedrooms (66%), one and a half bathrooms or fewer (96%), no fireplace (78%), and no garage or carport (53%). The typical new home of 2004 was two stories (52%), had three bedrooms (51%) or four bedrooms (37%), and only 5 percent had one and a half or fewer bathrooms (39% had two, 33% had two and a half, and 24% had three). Most new homes had at least one fireplace (55%) and a two-car garage (64%)—19 percent had three-car garages. Ninety percent of the new 2004 homes were built with central air-conditioning, which did not exist in 1950.[35] June is national homeownership month in America.

Americans by and large want traditional houses, rather than radically innovative houses that look like they came out of a *Jetsons* cartoon. What

is traditional varies by region, but that does not mean that today, a Cape Cod cottage would not appear as a traditional house in a Chicago suburb. Contemporary reiterations of traditional American houses continue to be built all over the country. The English brought medieval architecture to America in New England in the form of one- and two-room simple, heavy timber cottages. Until about 1700, the two-and-a-half-story versions of these clapboard-sided cottages, including saltboxes and Garrison houses, were built there. The saltbox was typified by a rear extension along the length of the house. Garrison houses had overhanging second stories, often decorated with pendants. Both were only one room deep, had steep roofs on which snow would be less likely to accumulate, and central chimneys and fireplaces that could warm the home in winter. The symmetrical two-and-a-half-story New England farmhouse, popular throughout the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth, was framed and sided with wood and had the steep, gabled roof and central chimney of the saltboxes, but it was larger and two rooms deep. The Cape Cod cottage of the eighteenth century was a very basic, almost square, one-and-a-half-story house with a centered chimney, steep roof, and the front door centered between four windows. Cedar shingles are its distinguishing characteristic. At the other end of the spectrum, New England imported Georgian architecture during the eighteenth century before the Revolution. These large, two-story, symmetrical homes were the choice of well-to-do, urban New Englanders, who embellished them in various ways.

In the Mid-Atlantic region, much of the eighteenth-century residential architecture was quite substantial. Quakers, Swedes, and Germans built small, two-story stone houses at first, and eventually larger stone farmhouses that, with time, took on Georgian themes. Greatly prized today, these houses were being built from the middle of the eighteenth century until nearly the end of the nineteenth century. The Dutch in New York were also building stone farmhouses, noted for their stepped gable roofs. The gambrel roof was not, however, the sine qua non of a Dutch house, as it seems to be for so-called Dutch colonial houses today.

Two houses originating in the Mid-Atlantic region were to become ubiquitous in westward-expanding America. One was the tall, two-story, long and narrow Mid-Atlantic *I* house, brought to America by the English. These symmetrical houses were built for more than two centuries into the twentieth century. They were made of stone, wood, bricks, and even logs. Most were quite plain, but decoration like a Greek temple entrance was not unheard of in the early nineteenth century. They are the old midwestern farmhouses that pepper the cornfields. Log houses, favored by Germans and Scandinavians, also spread across the country with new settlers. The claim to have

been born in a log cabin became a valuable political commodity in the nineteenth century—it was proof of being a man of the people. Contemporary log houses now have the opposite connotation.

Plantation houses from the Virginia tidewater southward were, of course, the homes of wealthy people, mostly of English extraction. The simple structures of the first settlers were eventually replaced by villas, often in the classical tradition, as interpreted by Andrea Palladio, often through English enthusiasts. Many of these great, historical American homes came right out of architectural books and lent little to development of an American vernacular.

The seaports of Charleston, South Carolina, and New Orleans, on the other hand, developed architectures unique in America. Charleston's single houses, which appear to be sitting sideways on their narrow lots, could rise to three stories. Piazzas or porches stretch along the sides of the houses on the first and second floors. Around New Orleans, Creole cottages on posts with their surrounding porches almost invite a crawfish boil. The same look appeared in much larger plantation houses. Cajun houses, with a single front porch, were like the Creole cottages, built on piers. In New Orleans itself, an indigenous architecture grew up from French, Spanish, and other influences when the city was rebuilt after fires in 1788 and 1794. The one-and-a-half-story Creole cottage went urban (no front porch at street side) and was expanded to a townhouse, often with a balcony. Shotgun houses, built for a century after 1830 to house Haitians, are another specialty of New Orleans. They are only one-story dwellings that are one room wide but may extend back to two or more rooms. Anglo influences were quick to invade New Orleans when it became U.S. territory, and many of New Orleans's grand homes, and even the fronts of shotgun houses, took on the highly prized classical design elements prevalent around the country.

Although Spain owned a large part of the United States at one time, from Florida to California, it had little influence on the development of American architecture outside of New Orleans, the Southwest, and California. Spanish Florida was essentially a disconnected backwater of the Spanish Empire that was not heavily colonized. Texas, New Mexico, and points north and west of them were, however, very connected. The early Spanish houses in New Mexico were single-level adobe structures that could take various shapes and even enclose a courtyard. New Mexico's later territorial architecture of the mid-nineteenth century wedded the adobe construction with modern American window treatments and classical decoration. The Spanish California houses, often *U* shaped, with porches along the inside of the *U* and clay tile roofs, were also made of adobe bricks.

While regional architectures have persisted and been revived, America's search for a national style began after the Revolution with classical revivalism

An example of a Native American adobe home. Getty Images/DAJ.

in the form of the rather elegant Federal style, Jeffersonian classicism based on Roman forms, and Greek revival. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, architects were looking elsewhere for inspiration. Tellingly for American architecture, these new styles were generally named for the British queen Victoria. Gothic style came into vogue with a liberating verticality, in comparison to the composed block of Greek temples. Furthermore, Gothic was a Christian, religious architecture. Gothic cues appeared in residential architecture as tremendously articulated, large homes and also even in small, white, wood-frame homes as wood cutout gingerbread nailed to very steep gables. For large homes, Italian villa and Italianate styles became popular.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the revitalization of Paris drew architectural interest and brought mansard roofs to America in the Second Empire style. Architect Henry H. Richardson went back into Christian history to rediscover Romanesque architecture, building massive stone houses with turrets and sweeping arches. Before architects tired of looking across the sea for new ideas, the Queen Anne style briefly flourished, the style that most Americans would call quintessential Victorian. These houses had turrets and towers and gables and porches popping out from everywhere. They

were showy homes, but a bit too much for people of simple taste. Shingle-style homes, which were very large houses with smooth lines of shingles and eyebrow dormers, did emerge, also thanks to Henry H. Richardson, as an indigenous American style late in the century, but these were country and shore houses not suitable for urban environments. By the end of the nineteenth century, and throughout much of the twentieth, the architecture of American homes returned to where it had started. The colonial revival brought back all the old styles, but in larger versions. The Georgian colonial is America's favored home.

The twentieth century dawned on another revival of classical residential architecture, American style. Architects also looked to the Italian Renaissance, France, and England. English revival houses were built all over the nation before World War II. They are known popularly as Tudor houses. In California and the Southwest, mission, Spanish colonial, and pueblo styles were revived. Meanwhile, however, Frank Lloyd Wright and his compatriots in the midwestern prairie school were designing houses with modern materials that would take their occupants out of the box by opening spaces and integrating the site with the environment. Famous as Wright's homes have become, the prairie school was a complete failure. In California, craftsman-style houses, characterized by built-in wooden structures, large hearths, informal spaces, and inviting front porches that transitioned from outside in, were popular for a brief period of about 25 years, until 1930.

While the prairie- and craftsman-style homes had limited appeal, the bungalow, first popularized in California, had wide appeal. These one-and-a-half-story unassuming, rather small houses with spacious front porches and gently sloping roofs became and remain the homes of middle America. Whether gabled in front or on the side, most Americans are quite familiar with the layout either because they grew up in one or because it was grandma's house. The front door opens into the living room, which flows into the dining room into a small, square hall. A door to the rear enters the kitchen, where there is a back door. To the right of the hall there is a bathroom with two bedrooms front and rear siding the kitchen and dining room. A steep set of stairs off the hall leads to the upper half story, where there is storage space that many families finished into another bedroom. Sears, Roebuck & Company as well as others sold tens of thousands of bungalows all over the country. They were delivered on railroad flatcars to be assembled at the building site.

The twentieth century also gave rise to two seemingly very different architectural expressions. Art Moderne, with its round, smooth stucco lines and protruding features, had the look of a 1956 Oldsmobile. The use of glass brick is a giveaway to this style, not to mention that it looks like no other style. The international style that came out of Germany in the 1930s produced, and

still produces, houses that were, like Art Moderne houses, not particularly popular with Americans. Called contemporary houses by most people, these rather stark houses (devoid of period decoration and consciously nonhistorical) opened spaces and celebrated pure structure. To many Americans, they looked like sculptures or museums, rather than comfortable homes.

Americans' concepts of traditional homes have changed with new family and social circumstances and their increasing desire for bigger, better, and more innovative spaces as housing prices have risen. They want more than a series of boxy rooms in a boxy house laid out on a boxy grid, and they want their dwellings to meet their personal needs. The U.S. housing stock has therefore become more diverse to serve the needs of singles and older people who do not want yard work or extra bedrooms for children. Owner-occupied condominiums fit that bill. Condominiums and townhouses began taking new shapes. Even though attached like row houses, staggering the units or building them to differing elevations gave each unit a definition, as if it were a detached house. As with detached houses, decks and small backyards took activity to the rear of the house. Whole retirement communities have sprung up, such as Sun City and its progeny in Arizona and the Villages in Florida, along with many others, that promise to make retirement socially active in smaller but traditional houses surrounded by shuffleboard courts and golf courses. Attractive assisted living complexes have been built with central amenities—libraries, dining facilities, social areas, courtyards—in which residents have their own living quarters.

Before World War II, the single-family detached house was the rule outside of urban row houses. Long and rather narrow housing lots were set on rigorous grids. Houses sported front porches that promoted communal welcoming, with detached garages, if any, in the rear at the end of driveways along the side of the lot that led into them. After World War II, Americans began to want open interior spaces, as if the failed prairie school had actually succeeded in getting at least this point across. While kitchens were opened to eating areas, stairways were no longer enclosed, skylights began to be used, and sloped, elevated ceilings became popular, Americans still wanted interior spaciousness, with a traditional exterior look.

By the 1960s, however, the entire orientation of houses had changed. Front porches went out of style, and garages were attached to the house, with front or side entrances and shorter driveways in favor of opened backyard patios and decks. The front yards became more formal settings for the houses, whereas backyards became places for entertainment, relaxation, swing sets, pools, and, of course, cookouts. Lots were now being drawn into more square than rectangular plots to accommodate larger backyards. Inside, master bedrooms and baths were enlarged and considerably fancied up to provide

parents of teenage baby boomers a respite and some privacy. A new addition, often at the expense of formal living rooms, was added to the American home: the family room. The gathered family had always been a cherished American ideal, but in the 1960s, any pretense of formality in home life was gone for good.

There were also other forces helping to change American housing. The growth of planned unit developments allowed flexibility for developers to break away from grids and aggregate differing kinds of housing in large developments with open spaces. These kinds of developments proliferated all over the country and resulted in new settings for homes on cul-de-sacs, winding roads, loops, and circles. It would be unusual today to find a large suburb laid out on a square grid. As land suitable for building has become scarce and more expensive, however, the preservation, renovation, and restoration of some of America's older structures for use as housing has occurred. Old warehouses, schools, factories, apartment buildings, and single homes have been preserved and rehabilitated as new housing. The United States was slow to recognize the value of its older and historical buildings, but the hope to preserve one of America's classic homes helped to get the ball rolling. The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, founded in 1853, is often given credit for begetting a new

A bird's eye view of American suburbia. Getty Images/PhotoDisc.

awareness of America's historic architecture. The secondary effect of having federal grants available for historic preservation was the rebirth of craftsmanship long lost to modern construction.

American residential building of the twenty-first century, largely the province of real estate developers, has taken a new twist. As already noted, houses have, as a matter of fact, become bigger, and they are made to look bigger by expanded articulation and, in large two-story houses, by a severe verticality. Window extensions and dormers abound—they add value and spaciousness. New materials have often replaced traditional wood and brick façades. Vinyl and aluminum sidings and brick veneers attached to wooden studs give the appearance of solidity. Even contemporary exteriors that appear from a distance to be stucco are often veneers that, when gently pressed against, give way. More interestingly, however, many new houses are impossible to place into the historical spectrum. There are suggestions of known styles—Palladian windows frequently are used in structures anything but classical. Suggestions of Greek revival porticoes may be found on one-story ranch houses. An oddly placed round window hints of colonial revival. So confused is residential architecture that developers do not call their houses Georgian, Tudor, or Italianate, but rather names like the Pearl, Millstone, Avalon, Chestnut, and Prescott—names that rightly evoke no architectural style at all.

It is a sad fact that security has become an important element in the design of new communities of homes. High-end homes can now be found in gated developments and even on limited-access islands. Entrances to housing developments have long been defined by the suggestion of entry gates, but there was open access to the streets inside. Today, the gates are operative and limit access to residents and those they permit to enter. Protected inner courts in multiunit buildings allow safety out of doors for their residents. Playgrounds have been designed on the roofs of schools for the safety of the children.

In fact, however, a home, no matter its value or location, means owning a real piece of America. Homeowners—property owners—pay taxes and protect their investment. They are good citizens living the American dream. In turn, the government guarantees the principle that personal property is sacrosanct. The Founding Fathers understood this well, allowing only male property owners to vote in federal elections. While this, of course, changed with time, the federal government has remained instrumental in expanding home ownership through governmental agencies like the Federal Housing Administration and quasi-governmental organizations like the Federal National Mortgage Association, which creates a secondary mortgage market. The Government National Mortgage Association guarantees prompt payment of housing loans issued by government agencies like the Federal Housing Administration, the Rural Housing Service, the Veterans Administration, and

the Office of Public and Indian Housing. Federal bankruptcy law excludes $125,000 of the value of a home, while the states of Texas and Florida have unlimited exclusions. Home ownership is an elemental American value.

Notes

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2. *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2006,* http://www.census.gov.

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14. National Endowment for the Arts, Research Division, "Arts Participation by Region, State, and Metropolitan Area," note no. 72, January 1999, http://www.nea.gov.

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18. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Information Programs, "Art on the Edge: 17 Contemporary American Artists: Preface," http://usinfo.state.gov.

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23. Carter Wiseman, *Shaping a Nation* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), 22–24.

24. Ibid., 36–37.

25. See Henry Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style: Architecture Since 1922* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1932).

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About the Editor and Contributors

BENJAMIN F. SHEARER received his PhD in the history of ideas from St. Louis University and his MSLS from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He has written and edited several reference books, including *Home Front Heroes* (Greenwood Press, 2007), *The Uniting States* (Greenwood Press, 2004), and *State Names, Seals, Flags and Symbols* (3rd ed., Greenwood Press, 2002).

ELLEN BAIER is an independent scholar and writer who is active in theater and national tour productions. In 2004, Franklin & Marshall College awarded her its Williamson Medal. She is also a major contributor to *Home Front Heroes: A Biographical Dictionary of Americans during Wartime* (Greenwood Press, 2007).

WENDE VYBORNEY FELLER, PhD, is a corporate consultant and freelance writer. A graduate of the University of Minnesota, she has taught at a variety of universities, including, most recently, in the executive MBA program at the College of St. Mary in Moraga, California. Among her academic presentations are papers in Japanese and American war rhetoric at the conclusion of World War II. She lives in Phoenix, Arizona, and is working on her first novel.

AGNES HOOPER GOTTLIEB is the dean of Freshman Studies and Special Academic Programs at Seton Hall University. She also holds the rank of

professor in the Communication Department. She is the coauthor of *1,000 Years, 1,000 People: Ranking the Men and Women Who Shaped the Millennium* and the author of *Women Journalists and the Municipal Housekeeping Movement, 1868–1914,* from the Edwin Mellen Press. She has written dozens of articles and book chapters on journalism history. She also writes a monthly advice column for the parents of Seton Hall University students.

PAMELA LEE GRAY is an independent scholar who holds a PhD in American history from the University of Southern California. Her written work includes over 100 academic articles and several books on local history. Her curriculum design work teaches history using ethnography and historical visual images.

WILLIAM P. TOTH teaches writing at Heidelberg College and has been published in both the United States and England. His historical and literary writing has appeared in *African American National Biography, Back Home in Kentucky, Bend in the River, Chronicles of the Old West, Encyclopedia of African American History, SuperReal: The British Journal of Surrealism,* and others.